

LONDON (AP) — An upper house of parliament in the House of Lords took money from the return of a former minister on their behalf during a meeting on Sunday. The Liberal Democrat Party, a top human rights lawyer, made the case for a secret submission to a financial investigation of the document published in the House of Commons. "One of my concerns is that the bar has been set too low," said a Liberal Democrat spokesman. "The House of Commons is not a court of law. It is a place where the government is held to account. It is not a place where the government is allowed to hide its actions from the public."

OSCAR WINNER POSTPONED U.S. PREMIERE

MOSCOW (AP) — The premiere of the Oscar-winning film "The Thin Red Line" in the United States has been postponed until next month because of the recent bombing in the World Trade Center.

Israel, Oman discuss prospects for peace

CAIRO (Agencies) — Israel and Oman discussed the need to establish peace in the Middle East in the near future during talks in Jordan, a senior Omani official said here Sunday. Omani Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Youssef Ben Alawi Abdullah told reporters he met Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in Aqaba Saturday and their talks focused on "the importance of restoring peace as soon as possible." Mr. Ben Alawi said the meeting was part of the multilateral Middle East peace talks. An Israeli official said Mr. Peres and Mr. Ben Alawi discussed plans to open interest sections in Israel and Oman. The two also discussed the results of Thursday's summit in Cairo between the leaders of Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) aimed at rescuing the Middle East peace process. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin paid an unprecedented visit to Oman in late December.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

Volume 19 Number 5837

AMMAN MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1995, RAMADAN 6, 1415

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Israeli legislators visit Jordan Crown Prince urges Jordanian-Israeli contacts at all levels to identify priorities and launch joint action

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A delegation from the Israeli parliament (Knesset), representing all Israeli political parties, paid a visit to Jordan on Sunday as part of ongoing efforts to develop bilateral relations after the two countries signed a peace treaty in October. The lawmakers, who were flown to Amman by a Royal Jordanian plane from Tel Aviv, were received by His Majesty King Hussein at the Al Hashemiyyah Palace. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister, Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, Lower House of Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Al Sour, His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem, several members of the cabinet and parliament, and senior officials. The Israeli delegation was headed by Knesset Speaker Shevach Weiss of the Labour Party. Jordan Television said the team had 30 members, but international agencies said they were 28. Before the King received the visitors, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan

addressed the group, reaffirming Jordan's commitment to peace.

The Crown Prince outlined the efforts undertaken by the Kingdom to live up to the letter and spirit of the peace treaty and called for Jordanian-Israeli dialogue on all levels and in all spheres to develop cooperation.

The Crown Prince called for Jordanian-Israeli relations based on "peaceful cohabitation" in three stages: "getting to know one another, through meetings, exchange of information, personal contacts; the delimitation of the areas and the priorities for joint action and the formation of committees or other bodies charged with the responsibility of preparing the ground for the third stage, which will consist of joint activities in the areas agreed upon."

"The successful transition from peace-making to peace-building requires statesmanship and joint effort," the Crown Prince said. "Our... ability to deliver durable peace and prosperity to future generations is still dependent on our willingness for compromise and sacrifice."

The Crown Prince cautioned against "the emergence of an apologetic tone for peace."

underlined that "Jordan is not wasting any time in translating these visions into concrete reality" through regional and international contacts.

The Crown Prince called for "dialogue between the two peoples at all levels, public and private, between institutions, governmental and non-governmental, and between individuals."

"It should involve parliamentarians, political parties, religious bodies, cultural activities, educationalists, intellectuals, welfare associations, (and) economic and commercial enterprises," he said.

The Crown Prince cited regional economic summits, including the economic conference to be held in Amman in October. The proposed Middle East regional development bank and organization for economic cooperation and development in the Middle East, the regional working group on the multi-lateral phase of the peace process, European Union-Mediterranean partnership, the Jordan Rift Valley development plan and free trade areas between Jordan and Israel as the key institutions that are being evolved to support the implementation of joint agreements.

(Continued on page 7)

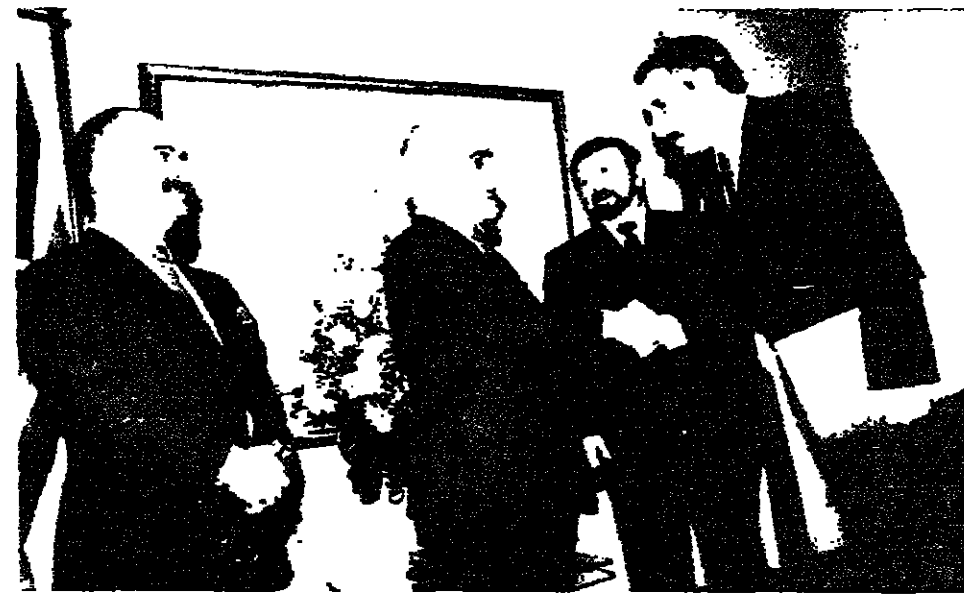
Shimon Shamir maybe named Jordan envoy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Shimon Shamir, former ambassador to Egypt, is expected to be appointed Israel's first ambassador to Jordan, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Tel Aviv University Professor Shamir, an Orientalist, has been picked out by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres as a "compromise candidate," the Yediot Aharanot newspaper said. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Mr. Peres have failed to agree on an envoy since the peace treaty was signed with Jordan on Oct. 26. Mr. Peres wanted a career diplomat in Amman while Mr. Rabin favoured a former Mossad intelligence expert.

Mr. Shamir, who worked in Cairo from 1988-1990 before leaving the diplomatic service, told AFP he had been contacted by Mr. Peres. "If Rabin and Peres can agree, I would be prepared to accept the post. But for the moment it is all speculation," he said.

A foreign ministry spokesman said no decision had been taken.



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday receiving Israeli parliament members at the Hashemiyyah Palace. (Second from right) is Highness Crown Prince Hassan on Sunday receiving Israeli parliament members at the Hashemiyyah Palace. (Petra photo)

Iryani briefs King on Yemeni-Saudi meetings

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday received Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Iryani, who briefed him on the progress of negotiations aimed at settling the Yemeni-Saudi border dispute.

Dr. Iryani arrived in Amman from Syria with a message for the King from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, covering "ways to further cement Yemeni-Jordanian ties, Arab and regional issues as well as the latest international developments," the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Dr. Iryani briefed King Hussein on "the progress of negotiations between the Yemeni and Saudi governments" aimed at resolving their border dispute, it said. In January last year King Hussein brokered a reconciliation pact between Sanaa and the leaders of former South Yemen.

It was not immediately clear whether Dr. Iryani, who left for home later Sunday, was seeking Jordan's mediation in the Yemeni-Saudi border dispute. Jordan was Dr. Iryani's third stop after Egypt and Syria, which both mediated between Riyadh and Sanaa to

reduce tension on the border. According to diplomats in Sanaa, Yemen is seeking international support for a mechanism to monitor its disputed border with Saudi Arabia and ease tension between the two countries.

They said Yemen had received an idea to form a joint military committee of Yemeni and Saudi chiefs of staff and Egyptian and Syrian representatives, first aired by official Yemeni sources last month but received coolly by Saudi Arabia.

Dr. Iryani on Saturday briefed Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the dispute, before flying to Damascus on a similar mission. In a departure statement Dr. Iryani expressed his country's support for moves by Jordan to unify Arab ranks and coordinate the stands of Arab countries on issues of concern to the Arab Nation.

Dr. Iryani voiced Yemen's readiness to extend every possible support to such Jordanian initiatives. "I delivered to His Majesty King Hussein a message from his brother President Ali Abdullah Saleh on the distinguished bilateral relations and developments in the region as well as Yemen's stand on them," Dr. Iryani said. He added that the message also dealt with the Yemeni-Saudi negotiations taking place in the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

He said the Riyadh talks were a positive sign on the way to solving the border dispute, stressing Yemen's keenness to end differences with Saudi Arabia. "Resolving the border dispute and returning the Yemeni-Saudi relations back to normal should be based on the Taif agreement signed between the two countries 60 years ago and on the basis of international law," Dr. Iryani told Petra, adding that the Riyadh talks would decide whether to hold a Yemeni-Saudi summit in the near future.

The Yemeni minister said Jordan and Yemen agreed to hold a ministerial meeting in Amman next month to prepare for the meetings of the Higher Jordanian-Yemeni Joint Committee later this year. He said this was agreed at a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Acting Foreign Minister Khaled Al Karaki, who was at the airport later in the day to see off Dr. Iryani.

Israel ignores PLO plea, keeps Palestinians under siege

Combined agency dispatches

PRIME MINISTER Yitzhak Rabin's cabinet on Sunday refused to meet Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) demands to allow tens of thousands of Palestinians back to jobs in Israel, announcing only a minor easing of the two-week closure of the West Bank and Gaza.

In its weekly session, the 18-member cabinet decided to allow Palestinian teachers and doctors into Israel and permit the import of Palestinian agricultural goods.

Deputy Palestinian Economic Minister Samir Huleileh said the renewed effort of produce to Israel would bring the impoverished Palestinians a much-needed daily infusion of \$1 million.

But the Palestinians are demanding Israel completely lift the closure, imposed after a Jan. 22 bombing by extremists that killed 20 Israeli soldiers and a civilian. "Obviously, we are disappointed," said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani after the decision. "This is not helping peace... It's not going to help combat violence."

Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat are scheduled to meet Thursday in the Gaza Strip to discuss any further easing of the closure and how to implement the next phase of the Israel-PLO accord.

Mr. Kanafani said he hoped the closure would be lifted at Thursday's meeting at the Erez crossing point between Israel and the autonomous Gaza Strip.

Israeli Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni told reporters Mr. Rabin would discuss the closure when he met Mr. Arafat.

Speaking after the weekly Israeli cabinet meeting, Ms. Aloni said the closure would continue "but there will be some exceptions for humanitarian reasons."

Mr. Arafat pressed Mr. Rabin to end the closure when they met in Cairo last Thursday during an Arab-Israeli summit. The closure threw more

than 50,000 Palestinians out of work and deepened poverty particularly in the Gaza Strip where unemployment runs at around 40 per cent.

The Jan. 22 bombing near Netanya led Mr. Rabin to set total separation from the Palestinians as a long-term goal and a study is underway on how best to achieve it.

Sunday's decision left open the possibility of a permanent separation between Israel and Palestinian-populated territories.

While consistent with the Israeli left wing's ultimate desire to withdraw from the West Bank, the separation policy runs counter to the autonomy accord which left the Palestinians heavily dependent on income from more than 100,000 labourers in Israel.

During the cabinet meeting, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid reportedly proposed making the closure permanent and paying the Palestinians a billion shekels

(Continued on page 7)

Arab League head to visit Jordan in March Cairo conference decides on action to help displaced

CAIRO (Agencies) — Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti announced here Sunday that Arab League Secretary General Esmat Meguid will visit Jordan early next month.

Speaking to reporters following a meeting with Dr. Abdul Meguid, Mr. Kabariti said that Jordan, the current president of the Arab League Council, was seeking to activate the role of the Arab League and its various institutions as a means of inducing joint Arab action.

The coming Arab League meeting will discuss the creation of an Arab court of justice and the Arab League's general secretariat will submit a proposed statute for the court which would settle disputes between Arab countries, Mr. Kabariti said.

The Arab League session, he added, will discuss the amendment of the Arab League Charter and the subject of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Jordan has repeatedly sought the creation of the Arab court of justice and the amendment of the charter whereby decisions will be taken on the strength of majority rather than unanimous voting as the case is at present.

Mr. Kabariti said he discussed all these issues with Dr. Abdul Meguid during the meeting, which was attended by Jordan's Ambassador to Egypt Nayef Al Qadi.

In an interview with Petra, Mr. Kabariti Sunday expressed confidence in achieving conciliation among Arab countries, underlining that no one party has monopoly over this conciliation.

Mr. Kabariti said Arab conciliation was contingent on various factors, with the most important among them being high-level coordination and confidence-building measures on the way to settling differences.

"We in Jordan have called and worked for developing such a mechanism and are following meetings with all the brethren with the hope that the current crisis facing the Arab World would be averted in the interest of the future Arab generations,"

Mr. Kabariti said. The minister said Jordan's relations with Arab Gulf countries are based on a legacy of "confidence, affection, respect and appreciation. All this, he said, will help bring these relations to the aspired levels again."

The minister said the unprecedented Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian-Israeli meeting held in Cairo on Thursday was an attempt to resolve problems impeding progress in the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

"The issue needs continuous follow-up and Arab support and it was apparent that Egypt was serious in having this stand," he said, expressing support for Egypt's efforts in this regard.

Describing Jordanian-Egyptian relations as brotherly, the minister said the Higher Jordanian-Egyptian joint committee will meet in the last week of March.

On Saturday, Mr. Kabariti attended a meeting with his Egyptian and Israeli counterparts. The meeting called for action to help Palestinians displaced by the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict to return home, as a next step forward in the peace process.

The ministers from Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority said after meeting here that the return of the refugees would be "a step towards settling the consequences of the Israeli occupation and achieving a just and global peace."

A joint statement said Jordan and Egypt had "promised to supply the Palestinians with what data on the subject they might possess" and urged "other countries hosting displaced persons as well as specialised international organisations" to do likewise.

The three parties expressed the hope that a forthcoming four-party meeting with Israel "suggested the end of February" would lead to "concrete results permitting the effective return of displaced Palestinians."

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan, Israel make progress on aviation and trade accords

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel made progress in working out a trade agreement during a meeting last week and will resume negotiations next week on remaining differences in approach to goods to be given preferential treatment, official sources said Sunday.

The two sides meanwhile advanced towards cooperation in civil aviation after Israel agreed to accept some of the Jordanian demands related to "air corridors and routes" through Israeli airspace, the chief executive of Royal Jordanian (RJ), the national carrier, said.

The sources said that Jordanian and Israeli trade negotiators met in Deir Alla on the Jordanian side of the Jordan Valley on Thursday to discuss a draft trade accord. "They made some progress and agreed to resume discussions on Feb. 13," said one source.

The source, who preferred anonymity, stressed that "both sides remain committed to the basic concepts" of the proposed trade agreement as called for in the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty signed on Oct. 26, but had not yet bridged some gaps, particularly in the areas of preferential trade.

"There are some problems and difficulties," but they are only natural when two sides are negotiating for favourable terms," said the source without elaboration, but adding: "We are hopeful that an accord could be concluded soon."

According to Jordanian officials, the Kingdom feels that Jordanian products should enjoy preferential treatment in Israel above a level that Israeli goods will have in Jordan, given the enormous economic disparity between the Israeli and Jordanian economies and taxation and customs tariff structures.

But the Israeli side is holding out, arguing that meeting the Jordanian demands would mean an elimination of any incentive for the King-

dom to eventually sign a free trade accord with Israel.

"It is pure business, and both sides are negotiating intensely to protect own interests," said another official. "One should not read anything more than that into the negotiations and the differences."

Meanwhile, Nader Dahabi, chief executive officer of Royal Jordanian, was quoted as saying by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that RJ and Israel's El Al airlines had reached an agreement on joint packages to fly tourists to Jordan and Israel.

Quoted by Petra, Mr. Dahabi said a committee made up of representatives from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the Royal Jordanian Air Force and RJ were studying the draft agreements, particularly in relation to altitudes that Israel is ready to offer flights to and from Jordan through Israeli airspace.

Mr. Dahabi confirmed that the main difference was over

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Somali gunmen free 16 U.N. workers

MOGADISHU (R) — Somali gunmen freed 16 United Nations aid workers late on Saturday after blockading them in a Mogadishu compound for three days, U.N. officials said on Sunday.

The siege on the World Food Programme (WFP) compound ended peacefully, U.N. spokesman George Bennett told reporters.

The aid workers, all foreigners, had been prevented from joining 8,000 U.N. peacekeepers and several hundred civilian staff who last week withdrew to the fortified port and airport in readiness for their final evacuation from Somalia this month.

Members of the Somali National Alliance of warlord Mohammed Farah Aided negotiated their release with the gunmen, Somali sources said.

"The gunmen, numbering about 30, claimed that they represented Somali port security men who had worked for WFP in 1992 at the height of the Somali emergency. They demanded additional compensation for the services of the security men," Mr. Bennett said.

The gunmen said earlier they were demanding \$420,000 which they alleged was owed to Somalia by the WFP. They sealed off the WFP offices and residences early on Thursday.

Mr. Bennett said the WFP legal department was to look into the compensation claims.

Some of those released flew to neighbouring Kenya. Others continued negotiations with the gunmen.

Mr. Bennett said the U.N. Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) was not involved in the negotiations to free the WFP workers, but had been kept informed of developments. Aid workers complain that UNOSOM has done little to save civilians although that was their original mission.

Mogadishu was fairly quiet on Sunday as looters carried off the last movable items from the downtown compound abandoned on Wednesday by U.N. troops and civilian staff as they pulled back.

Heavily-armed "technicals" — armed vehicles of the rival Somali factions — were out in big numbers.



A Palestinian couple argues with an Israeli soldier as they try to enter Jerusalem from the Bethlehem roadblock on Sunday. The Israeli government extended the closure of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip which was imposed two weeks ago after 21 people died in a suicide bombing (AFP photo)

Crunch week ahead for Mideast peace

NICOSIA (AFP) — A crunch week for Middle East peace lies ahead to test claims that a landmark Arab-Israeli summit in Cairo marked a turning point in the battered peace process.

The leaders of Israel, Jordan, Egypt and that Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) organised a series of high-level meetings this week to boost flagging peace talks when they met in Cairo on Thursday.

As a result Egypt confidently declared the Arab-Israeli peace process was "back on track."

Israel and the PLO are to return to the negotiating table in Cairo on Monday in an attempt to organise long-delayed elections to a Palestinian autonomy council on the West Bank.

Israel froze the talks after 21 people were killed in a double suicide bombing by Palestinian militants near Netanya on January 22.

PLO leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will then meet at the Erez crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip on Thursday to hammer out problems dogging the extension of Palestinian autonomy.

And foreign ministers from the four summit participants will meet in Washington for follow-up talks next Sunday.

Meanwhile, U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown travels to Egypt this week for an unprecedented meeting with Arabs and Israelis on trade and investment in a bid to give economic support to the peace process.

"Basically it's the economic counterpart of the Cairo meeting," said Ian Kalicki, a Commerce Department counsel, on the Feb. 8 meeting between the U.S., Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians in the Red Sea resort of Tabat.

Mr. Rabin hailed the Cairo summit as a "turning point" for peace which would continue to "act in the direction of peace in the Middle East."

He singled out for praise a condemnation from the four leaders of militant violence. Israeli public confidence in peace has been rocked by a series of suicide bombings which have left 56 people dead in 10 months.

"It's the first time that Israel and the chairman of the autonomous authority Yasser Arafat together condemn the terror supported by the Syrians," Mr. Rabin told state radio.

However, the Palestinians warned that the problem of violence would not simply disappear. Mr. Arafat's spokesman Marwan Kanafani said it was "impossible" for the Palestinians to give guarantees to rein in terrorism.

"The guarantees we can look for is to stop causes leading to violence, the causes being not only with the Palestinian self-rule authority," Mr. Kanafani said.

Mr. Rabin, Mr. Arafat, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein failed to make headway on other key issues plaguing Israeli-PLO negotiations.

No firm date was set for a redeployment of Israeli troops on the West Bank away from Palestinian built-up areas, already delayed by eight months.

Nor did Israel make any promises to halt the expansion of settlements in the West Bank or Jerusalem which has angered Palestinians and led to warnings of a new Palestinian uprising.

The PLO said the issue of settlements would top the agenda of the Rabin-Arafat meeting. "It is the main obstacle and must remain on the agenda until the problem is settled," said Finance Minister Mohammad Zuhdi Nashashibi.

And there was no commitment from Mr. Rabin to lift

the two-week closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, although the Israeli cabinet was to debate Sunday on whether to allow some Palestinians into Israel for "humanitarian reasons."

The closure has thrown some 50,000 Palestinians out of work in areas already hard hit by unemployment and economic problems.

Mr. Mubarak left Israeli and PLO leaders in no doubt of the importance of resolving such issues in their upcoming talks, and the price the region could pay for failure.

"Terrorism will be the only substitute if the peace (process) fails," he warned. "The collapse of the Israeli-PLO talks will provoke a number of problems politically, economically, socially and for security," he said Friday.

The Cairo summit was also hampering efforts to unblock the most troublesome track of the peace process — that between Israel and Syria.

Damascus ignored an open invitation to the gathering and was scathing about its prospects, dismissing it as just another attempt "to escape the crisis" since the "doomed" Palestinian autonomy accord was signed in 1993.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel expecting 90,000 immigrants

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel expects to receive 90,000 immigrants in 1995, compared with some 80,000 last year, Israeli Integration Minister Yair Tzaban said Saturday.

Tzaban said 6,500 immigrants came to Israel in January, 5,780 of them from the former Soviet Union. The immigration figure represented an 11 per cent rise on January's total, and a 19 per cent rise for immigration from the former Soviet Union. Mr. Tzaban said the increase was largely due to difficulties in several former Soviet republics, notably Ukraine. More than 625,000 immigrants have arrived in Israel from the former Soviet Union since 1989.

Libya probes tanker blast in Malta

TRIPOLI (AFP) — A Libyan commission of inquiry will visit Malta to establish what caused an explosion which killed nine naval shipyard workers and virtually destroyed a Libyan oil tanker in the port of Valletta, a spokesman for the national oil company said here Saturday.

Shipyard workers were also injured, two of them critically in the explosion on board the tanker Oum el Farouq, which Maltese officials said was apparently caused by an accumulation of gas in the vessel's hold. "A commission is to go to Malta later to investigate. The causes of the explosion are still not known," said the Libyan official, without specifying when the visit would take place. The tanker was undergoing repairs at the time of the blast, which was heard over Valletta. It shattered windows in surrounding houses and started a fire which firefighters rapidly brought under control.

Iraqi foreign minister to visit Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Sayed Al Sahhaf will visit Ankara Monday, the Turkish news agency Anatolia reported, quoting his Turkish counterpart Murat Karayalcin. "It is important to continue talks at ministerial level," Mr. Karayalcin told Anatolia, without elaborating. He was speaking in London at the end of a meeting with his British, German, French and Italian counterparts. Turkey supports a lifting of the U.N. sanctions imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Ankara says the sanctions have cost the Turkish economy some \$20 billion. Turkey's trade with Iraq stood at around \$3 billion a year before the Gulf crisis.

Four drown in Cairo drain

CAIRO (AFP) — Four people drowned in the draining system of a Cairo suburb Saturday, police said. A municipal worker went down a drainage hole in the Shuja el-Kheima district to carry out repairs and was swept away by effluent. Alarmed when the man failed to reappear, his colleague went down the hole to look for him but was also swept away. His shouting alerted four passers-by, who went to save him but were also overcome by the effluent. Rescuers managed to save two of them and recovered two bodies. The survivors said that once they entered the drain, they were "suffocated by such a disgusting stench that they fainted" and fell into the effluent.

Pakistan manpower to Gulf declines

ABU DHABI (AP) — Pakistan, a leading supplier of manpower to Gulf states, has witnessed a 55 per cent drop in its annual labour exports to the region over the past decade, a Pakistani official has said. The number of Pakistanis leaving their homeland to work in the Gulf, belonging to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), dropped from 200,000 annually in the early 1980s to about 90,000 presently, said Mohammad Saeed Mehdi, Mr. Mehdi, who heads a government agency that deals with manpower exports, made his comments during a visit to Abu Dhabi. Commenting on the decline, Mr. Mehdi said most of the early 1980s development projects in the Gulf have been completed. Moreover, with most Gulf countries experiencing budget deficits, some have cut back development expenditure, resulting in a fall in expatriate labour demand. There are about eight million expatriates in the GCC member states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, approximately one million of whom are Pakistanis, according to Pakistani consulates. The Pakistani government has renewed efforts to enlarge the number of Pakistanis working overseas. Higher manpower exports help in solving domestic unemployment problems and, through remittances from abroad, add to the foreign exchange earnings. Mr. Mehdi plans to take his mission to drum up a bigger market for Pakistani labourers to Brunei, Malaysia, South Korea, Cyprus and Lebanon. He already has been to Saudi Arabia and Dubai.

Iran builds own tanks, personnel carriers

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has started building its own battle tanks and amphibious armoured personnel carriers, the official Iranian news agency IRNA reported Saturday.

IRNA said the tank was an improved version of Russian-made tanks seized by Iranian forces during the 1980-1988 war with Iraq. It did not specify which model the Iranian tank was based on. The amphibious armoured personnel carrier, called Barra, could carry personnel or equipment at sea or on land, IRNA said. Barra is the name of the winged horse on which the Prophet Mohammad travelled from Mecca to Jerusalem and then ascended to heaven. The Revolutionary Guards Corps Saturday took delivery of the first batch of tanks and armoured personnel carriers, IRNA said. Corps Commander Mohsen Rezaei said all the components used in the troop carrier matched international standards. Israel is the only other country in the Middle East to be building its own tank, the Merkava. Egypt is planning to assemble M-1A1 Abrams tanks under licence from the U.S. firm General Dynamics.

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U.S. helped supply arms to Iraq, ex-official says

NEW YORK (Agencies) — The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) secretly helped a Chilean arms dealer sell sophisticated bombs to Iraq in the mid-1980s, the New York Times reported in its Sunday editions.

The newspaper, quoting a former U.S. National Security Council official, said the weapons sales took place while President Ronald Reagan's administration was professing neutrality in the war then raging between Iraq and Iran.

The newspaper report was based on a court affidavit by Howard Teicher, who worked for the National Security Council from 1982 to 1987 as a main adviser on the Middle East.

Mr. Teicher's affidavit, filed last week, includes serious allegations on the question of whether U.S. intelligence officials played a direct and active role in Iraq's military buildup, the newspaper said.

It said the affidavit may rekindle the debate over whether the Reagan and Bush administrations' efforts to provide military assistance to Iraq inadvertently created the military powerhouse that invaded Kuwait in 1990 and started the Gulf war.

The allegations of CIA involvement were placed in the court record in a Miami conspiracy case against two executives of Teledyne in Los Angeles.

Teledyne has pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges growing out of allegations that it violated federal export laws by shipping 130 tonnes of the metal zirconium to Chile, where it was used to help assemble the bombs.

The wealthy Chilean businessman charged in the case, Carlos Cardoen, has acknowledged selling arms to Iraq, but maintains that he cannot be charged in an American courtroom because the United States secretly approved sales.

Mr. Teicher said he believed the CIA "authorised, approved and assisted" Mr. Cardoen's efforts.

Bengali tigers pampered in Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Michael and Suraya must be among the most pampered Bengali tigers in the world: they live like royalty with the family of a wealthy businessman in an exclusive district of Kuwait City.

The couple, both three-year-olds, are spoilt from morning till night. They have their teeth brushed, their hair shampooed, and a lullaby and soft words to coax them into drinking their milk at bed-time.

The five-member family of Fuad Abdul decided to add two tigers to their household two years ago.

Now they would not part with Michael and Suraya for the world. "It would be like asking someone to sell his children. I could not let go of my two tiger children," Mr. Abdul told AFP.

Outside the sumptuous family villa, the tigers also have all mod cons in an iron-fenced enclosure equipped with air conditioning, a heater and a luxury bathroom with all kinds of shampoos.

Umm Mohammad, the wife of Mr. Abdul, besides caring for her three children, behaves just like a mother with the tigers too.

"I bathe Suraya and Michael every morning and brush their teeth, after cleaning up the room," she said. "Michael hates being shampooed but my lovely daughter Suraya likes it very much."

The tigers only drink milk imported from England and home-cooked meat.

Mr. Abdul said Suraya was given to him as a gift from a Bahraini friend. At the time, she was only a few days old.

"Her mother is the star tiger in an Italian circus," he said proudly. "But I bought Michael from the Isle of Wight zoo in England a few months after I got his mate."

Mr. Abdul refused to disclose the price.

"Raising a tiger at your place is very difficult and dangerous at the same time. But if you treat them like your own children... they will never harm you or anybody else," he said.

"Suraya and Michael play every day with our two-month-old cat... and it has never been harmed."

Ahmad, the youngest son, aged 13, acknowledges, however, that "as they grow up, it's becoming very difficult for us to play with them."

"People whom I don't know come to visit my place just to see the tigers... we usually give them posters we printed for them on their last birthday," he added.

The posters show Suraya with a ribbon and pink flowers in her mane.

Mr. Abdul and his wife have a menagerie of animals, including a deer and a peacock, not to mention several cats and dogs. They say they feel



Umm Mohammad, a rich Kuwaiti housewife, brushing the teeth of Michael, a three-year-old Bengali tiger in her home in Kuwait City (AFP photo)

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

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PROGRAMME TWO	
17:00	Cooties Minutes
17:30	Our Le Micellu Gagne
18:00	Association Ben Fattous
19:00	News In French
19:15	Carudi De Notes
19:30	Ramadan in the World
19:45	Magazine Zoro One
20:00	Street Hawk
20:45	The Miraculous Cosmos of the Brain
21:10	By Way of the Stars
22:00	News in English
22:20	Fall from Grace
22:59	Feature Film "Children of a Lesser God"
PRAYER TIMES	
05:03	Fajr
06:22	(Sunrise) Duha
11:50	Dhuhr
14:50	Asr
17:15	Maghreb
18:36	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church, Swifich, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terrence Church Tel. 623306	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711231	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712561	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 711751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 625226	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328	
German-speaking Evangelical congregation Tel. 684195	
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675991	
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be cold with skies cloudy to partly cloudy. Rainfall is expected at intervals with winds westerly moderate to severe. In Amman, winds will be southerly active and winds rough.	
Min/Max. temp.	
Amman	9 / 17
Aqaba	9 / 17
Decatur	3 / 11
Jordan Valley	8 / 16

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR	
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 11, Aqaba 18 Humidity readings: Amman 97 per cent, Aqaba 55 per cent.	
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Yusef Rashed	964301
Dr. Jamil Tarif	704-10
Dr. Fawaz Dahbas	751155
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim	585446
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	773336
Al Adana pharmacy	637053
Nairoch pharmacy	629072
Al Salam pharmacy	626730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shimacani pharmacy	637660
Nairoch pharmacy	639072
Najib pharmacy	647632
IRBID:	
Dr. Ali Al Omani	272032
Alquds pharmacy	(-)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Randa Shahin	992710
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Emergency	630341
Rescue Police 192/22111	637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	773121
Hijab Police	643402
Public Security Department	996390
Price Complaints	605840
Price Complaints	641176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	121
Director's assistance	773111
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repairs	623101
Abdulk Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	688100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815015
Electric Power Company	636381
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813612/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhar, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeesam	664171/4
Shmeesam Hospital	660131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Mushter Hospital	66727/9
The Islamic, Abdali	664164/8
Al-Ahli, Abdali	771101/3
Italian, Al-Muhayreen	771101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	771101/3
Amry, Marka	891611/15
Queen Aila Hospital	605240/50
Amal Hospital	674155
ZARQA:	
Zarqa Govt. Hospital	09493323
Zarqa National Hospital	09493323
Ibn Sina Hospital	09493323
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	09493323
IBRD:	
Pross Bama Hospital	01275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	01272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	05247100

Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
06:45	Khartoum (SD)
09:35	Cairo (MS)
12:35	Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
14:00	Hudaidah (YF)
14:30	Kiev (6U)
17:05	Rome (AZ)
17:50	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
18:15	Paris (AF)
23:10	Dubai (EK)
01:10	London (BA)
01:10	Amsterdam (KL)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ)	
Flights (Terminal 1)	
05:45	Beirut (RJ)
10:45	Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:20	Frankfurt, London (RJ)
12:45	Cairo (RJ)
19:45	Cumbers (large)
20:30	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
20:40	Damascus (RJ)
21:25	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
06:00	Istanbul (TK)
08:15	Beirut (ME)
10:30	Cairo (MS)
13:30	Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF)
15:00	Sanaa (YV)
15:15	Kiev (6U)
19:15	Dubai (EK)
02:20	Amsterdam (KL)
02:35	London (BA)
HIJAZ RAILWAY	
TRAIN	
Dep. Amman	8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fils per kg	
Apple	700-800
Banana	600
Banana (Mukammal)	600
Cabbage	140/170
Carrot	220/250
Cauliflower	160/180
Cucumbers (large)	180/200
Cucumbers (small)	180/200
Garlic	300/320
Grape Fruit	200/220
Lebanese	130/150
Marrow (large)	130/150
Marrow (small)	200/220
Onion (green)	140/160
Onion (dry)	180/200
Orange	300/320
Pepper (hot)	1100/1200
Pepper (sweet)	450/500
Potato	200/220
Radish	200/220
Spinach	120/140
String Beans	1000/1100
Tomato	300/320

Home

Minister, N

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A dispute between the Minister of Supply and the Parliament over accusations and counter-accusations traded in a heated session in the past week over supply materials for the government.

Mr. Zoubi had accused the Minister of Supply of having received a gift of 50 tonnes of rice from Egypt while in fact, it received 150 tonnes, and said the ministry had failed to disclose any part of it to the public.

The minister had told the session in the previous session, when the issue was raised, that part of the gift was sold to hotels and restaurants and the remaining 21 tonnes were still at the ministry's warehouses.

Brown e

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald Brown will be in Jordan for a few hours on Wednesday, meeting with the Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Bakr and several other members of the Cabinet as well as representatives of the private sector.

The meetings will be held at the Royal Palace in Amman, where Mr. Brown and a delegation accompanying him are scheduled to arrive Wednesday morning from Tabat, Egypt. They will leave for Kuwait in the afternoon.

London is expected to affirm its commitment to the market economy and to remove trade barriers in a gradual manner that would ensure that the Kingdom's industries are not hurt by unfair competition.

The Kingdom will also seek American official engagement for imports from Jordan and to secure preferential treatment for Jordanian products in the market.

3 die in road

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Three people were killed in a road accident involving a car and a truck early Saturday morning on the newly built Amman highway. Public Security Department (PSD) reports said.

According to the report, the accident, which occurred near the Khour bridge, was attributed by traffic officials to slippery roads caused by the car driver's loss of control.

The report said that the accident occurred when the driver of the car, Ibrahim Al-Khatib, lost control of his vehicle and drove into the left side of the road and struck an oncoming truck driven by Hussein M. Al-Husseini.

The car was accompanied by a passenger, identified by police as Qasim A., who was also killed in the accident.

All three victims were rushed to the Maqraa government hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival.

Meanwhile, one person was injured and taken to the hospital.

WHAT'S GOING ON

Film entitled "Jules Et Jim" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

Play (in Arabic) entitled "Yousif" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

Exhibition of works by Qasim Al-Khatib at the Royal Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of the works of the artist Darat Al Funun. Also an exhibition of Phase II-Doors by artist Ghada Dabdab and Arab artists.

Educational works depicting the French Cultural Centre.

Exhibition of works by Hassan Al-Husseini at the International Hotel in Aqaba.

Home News

Minister, MP settle dispute in House

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A dispute between Minister of Supply Adel Qudah and Parliament member Fawaz Zoubi stemming from accusations and recommendations traded in a Parliament session in the past month over supply materials was defused during a Lower House session Sunday.

Mr. Zoubi had accused the Ministry of Supply of announcing that it had received a gift of 50 tonnes of rice from Egypt while in fact, he said, it received 150 tonnes, and said the ministry sold the gift to hotels and restaurants and failed to distribute any part of it to the needy citizens.

The minister had told the House in the previous sessions, when the issue was raised, that part of the gift was sold to hotels and restaurants and the remaining 21 tonnes were still at the ministry's warehouses.



Adel Qudah



Fawaz Zoubi

The minister had said that the ministry's law does not allow it to distribute the gift to needy families.

The minister also said that Mr. Zoubi was persisting in his stand in a bid to throw suspicion on the ministry's activities and offend its dignity. Therefore, the minister said that the government and the House should refer the whole matter to the public prosecutor and that the government should sue the deputy for libel.

In reaction, deputy Zoubi told a local daily Sunday, before the House session, that he would demand from the House to withdraw confidence in the minister of supply.

At the outset of Sunday's session, Parliament Speaker Saad Hayel Srour addressed the government and the deputies, stressing that Mr. Zoubi or any other deputy have the right to raise any question which they believe would be in the interest of the

general public and to shed light on any violation that might be committed by the executive authority, in accordance with the Constitution and Parliament regulations.

At that, the minister said that his decision to refer the matter to the public prosecutor was aimed at enabling Parliament to have access to all details and all information in this case, noting that the public prosecutor can decide whether any ministry official had abused his authority in handling public funds.

Mr. Qudah stressed that by making the demand, he had not meant to cause any offence to Mr. Zoubi or any other deputy. He said he apologised if the move was interpreted as an offence because the executive authority was keen on maintaining close cooperation with and not to cause offence to the House or its members.

On hearing this reply, Mr. Zoubi said he would consider the matter closed.

Queen holds iftar banquet

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor held an iftar banquet Sunday at Raghadan Palace for members of the Royal Family and the wives of government officials.

Earlier Sunday, the Queen had participated in a tree-planting ceremony at the Applied Science University to mark the Arab Day. The Applied Science University, established in 1991, offers more than 30 specialties, some of which are the first to be taught in the Arab World.

Dr. Abdullah Al Abbadi, president of the university, presented the Queen with a silver oak tree model produced at the university. The Queen planted an oak and a pine tree before touring the university.

Queen Noor visited two pharmacology laboratories, the new athletic centre which, upon completion in June, will be the largest in the Middle East, and the Department of Engineering and Architecture.

The Queen spoke with the students and faculty members, who demonstrated various scientific experiments and exhibited their architectural plans and models. She was particularly impressed with the university's computer simulations of architectural designs and inquired about future plans to link up with the Internet, a worldwide network of computers.

Queen Noor, accompanied by Princess Alia Al Faisal, was received by the minister of higher education, the chairman and the members of the Board of Trustees and the deans of the university.

RJ's Board of Directors endorses ambitious plan for fleet modernisation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Board of Directors of Royal Jordanian (RJ) the national airline, has endorsed an ambitious plan for the modernisation of the airline's fleet. RJ President and Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi announced Sunday.

RJ board's plan entails the acquisition of modern, long-range planes which are needed for the modernisation project, he said. Currently RJ owns 17 planes of which 14 are for passengers and three for freight, said Mr. Dahabi, adding that 11 planes are on lease to RJ with a purchase option at the end of the issue: five TriStar planes, which will be fully owned by RJ in two years' time, four 310 Airbus and two 320 Airbus, which will become the property of the national airline by the year 2002.

He said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the rest of the planes are leased to RJ on operational basis, which means that the planes will return to the possession of the manufacturing company upon the termination of the lease.

Mr. Dahabi said that RJ is currently holding negotiations with the manufacturers, aimed at reaching an agreement on capital lease, to get a replacement for the TriStar planes.

RJ is also about to finalise a feasibility study on the prospect of operating small-size planes, seating between 30 to 60 passengers, to be used for domestic flights between Amman and Aqaba and between Queen Alia International Airport and Marka Airport, a move which will also allow the airline to operate twice daily flights between Amman and Aqaba instead of one at present, said Mr. Dahabi who expressed hope that this programme could be introduced early in the coming summer.

Mr. Dahabi noted that small size planes could also be used for flights to Damascus, Beirut, Sharm Al Sheikh in Sinai, Cairo and Al Ghardaqah and on flights where smaller numbers of passengers, up to 60, are booked for the flight.

Furthermore, RJ has now decided to purchase one 320 Airbus plane to be used on short and medium-range flights and the airline was expected to receive the new plane in February of next year when RJ will put two Boeing 727 planes out of service, continued Mr. Dahabi.

Referring to new routes for RJ Mr. Dahabi said that the

national airline will reopen routes that have been closed due to political and economic considerations in the past. In this respect, RJ will reopen routes to Belgrade and Bucharest and will also open a new route to Osaka, in Japan, in May, and the Amman-Alexandria route.

RJ will soon increase its Amman-Singapore flights to three from two at present, Amman-New York flights to six instead of five and Amman-Canada flights to three instead of two per week.

Concerning the privatisation of RJ, he said that the British consultancy firm Peat had submitted its report to a committee charged with conducting the privatisation process, calling for the transformation of the airline into a public shareholding company owned by the government for two years, after which local and non-Jordanian investors will be allowed to acquire shares.

The British consultancy firm's report also recommended that the national airlines capital be increased, that the Gateway Hotel and the free shops at the airport be sold to ensure liquidity for the airline and that the airline be operated on commercial basis to increase profits, Mr. Dahabi said.

Brown expected in Aqaba for brief talks

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — U.S. Commerce Secretary of State Ronald Brown will be in Jordan for a few hours on Wednesday, meeting with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and several other members of the Cabinet as well as representatives of the private sector.

The meetings will be held at the Royal Palace in Aqaba, where Mr. Brown and a delegation, accompanying him are scheduled to arrive Wednesday morning from Tabaa, Egypt. They will leave for Kuwait in the afternoon.

Jordan is expected to reaffirm its commitment to free market economy and facilitate trade by removing protective barriers in a gradual manner that would ensure that the Kingdom's local industries are not hurt through unfair competition.

The Kingdom will also seek American official encouragement for imports from Jordan and to secure preferential treatment for Jordanian products in the

U.S. The U.S. is the largest single exporter to Jordan, accounting for about \$300 million of the Kingdom's imports during 1994 and less than \$10 million in exports.

Also expected to be discussed during the Aqaba meeting are preparations for a conference to be held in Amman in October as a follow-up to the Middle East and North Africa economic summit held in Casablanca, Morocco, late last year.

In Tabaa, Mr. Brown and the delegation, which will include chief executives of at least 10 American companies, will attend a meeting, beginning on Tuesday, of officials and businessmen from Jordan, Egypt, Israel and the Palestinian territories.

The Tabaa meeting is billed as an effort to enhance regional cooperation as well as explore means to increase American trade with the region's countries and a reflection of "the commitment of the government and the private sector to the peace process."

The Jordanian delegation

to the meeting is expected to be headed by Minister of Trade and Industry Ali Abul Ragheb and will also include representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Chamber of Industry.

"Our goals of economic cooperation and trade development are integral to that process," Mr. Brown was quoted as saying in a press release issued by the Department of Commerce this week. "To build lasting peace and stability, we must ensure the region has a strong economic foundation."

Mr. Brown visited Jordan in late 1993 and said the Department of Commerce was seriously engaged in efforts to encourage the American private sector to do business with and in the Kingdom in trade as well as joint ventures.

Another theme during that visit was a call for the lifting of the secondary and tertiary aspects of the Arab economic boycott of Israel so that American firms could do business with Arab countries which have been boycotting them because of their trade links

with Israel. Removing trade barriers and methods of implementing bilateral and multilateral trade agreements are expected to be the key theme for the Tabaa meeting, which will also offer an opportunity for the private sectors of the U.S. and the region's countries to discuss prospects for business.

While in the area, Mr. Brown will also chair the third meeting of the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission, which "encourages joint projects between high-technology industries in the U.S. and Israel and promotes commercially oriented scientific exchanges between the universities and research institutes of the two countries."

Mr. Brown and the delegation accompanying him will visit Israel, the West Bank, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) "to discuss ways to increase economic viability and create jobs in the U.S. and throughout the region," according to the Commerce Department.

Al al Bayt University officially inaugurated

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

MAFRAQ — The Mafraq-based Al al Bayt University will be formally opened Monday at a ceremony held under Royal patronage.

A total of 240 local and 450 non-Arab Muslim students are currently enrolled at the Al al Bayt University for the first academic year 1994-95, studying at the arts, science, economy and administrative science, Arabic and Sharia and Islamic Law faculties, according to a university official on the eve of the event.

He said that in addition to these faculties, the university runs institutes for studies in Islamic architecture, astronomy and space, together with two centres, one for languages and one for computer training.

His Majesty King Hussein announced plans for the establishment of Al al Bayt University in August 1992 when he said that the new institution would be a gift from Jordan to the Arab and Islamic Nation.

King Hussein entrusted His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan with chairing the new university's constituent assembly which includes elite scholars from Arab and Islamic countries.

University President Mohammad Adnan Al Bakht told the Jordan Times in a recent interview that although the university will aim at drawing together Muslim students from all Islamic countries, the primary language of research and instruction at Al al Bayt University will be Arabic.

According to a law for establishing the new higher educational institution, Al al Bayt University aims at serving Islamic communities and the human society in general by all possible means.

The law says that Al al Bayt is an independent international, Islamic and scientific establishment governed by a Royal Commission chaired by Prince Hassan.

To mark the inauguration, the Ministry of Post and Communications announced Sunday that it will issue a new set of commemorative stamps. The postal stamps will be of 80, 125 and 200 fils denominations and can be bought from all post offices as of Monday.

Jordan, Israel today start direct postal service

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Israel launch direct postal services between them today, three months after they signed a peace treaty that normalised relations and opened the door for close cooperation.

Jordan and Israel opened direct phone services on Aug. 8, two weeks after the two countries signed the Washington Declaration, which accelerated their peace negotiations and culminated in the October peace treaty.

The postal services will include letters as well as parcels, but will be limited to air mail through Cyprus in the initial phase, said Sadi Al Akour, a senior official of the Post and Communications Ministry.

"There will be no overland mail in the first phase as agreed upon by the two sides," Mr. Akour told the Jordan Times. "All mail will be flown to Cyprus from where it will be sent to Israel and Jordan."

Jordan and Israel have not reached a civil aviation agreement yet (see story on page one). Once such an accord is reached, mail will be flown directly to each other.

Mithgal Abu Heza, director of postal services, said postal charges for air-mail to Israel would be 240

fils for the first 10 grammes and 120 fils per every extra 10 grammes or part thereof. Different tariffs will apply for parcels.

For the moment, Jordanian mail to the occupied West Bank and the Palestinian autonomous territory of Gaza and Jericho will also be routed through Israel.

As such, the Jordan-Israel service is expected to be dominated by mail between Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Jordan rather than Israel and the Kingdom.

Mr. Abu Heza said he expected mail to take at least two days to reach destinations in Israel and Jordan.

Mr. Abu Heza noted that direct postal services between Jordan and the Palestinian territories could become operative after the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in Gaza and Jericho establishes its own postal authorities.

Agreements signed between Jordan and the PNA last month call for direct postal services between the Kingdom and the Palestinian territories, but the accord will be effective on a date to be agreed upon by the two parties — meaning when the PNA sets up the relevant facilities on its side to receive and dispatch mail.

Jordan and the Palestinian territories would use the King Hussein Bridge across the River Jordan for the postal services.

As and when the Kingdom and Israel reach an agreement on overland transfer of mail, the Jordan Valley Bridge (old Sheikh Hussein Bridge) in the north is expected to be used. That access constitutes a crossing between the territories of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the State of Israel.

The King Hussein Bridge is seen as a crossing between Jordanian and Palestinian territories.

The "mumtaz" (express courier) service, which Jordan operates to dozens of countries, will not be applicable to Israel at this point, Mr. Akour said.

"We need to have special agreements between the two sides for the mumtaz mail," he said.

Under the Jordan-PNA accord on cooperation in postal and communications services signed on Jan. 26, Jordan will be the focal point for receiving from and dispatching mail to the occupied territories.

The PNA will use the Queen Alia International Airport and the Royal Jordanian airline for mail originating in and destined to the autonomous territories.

Markets 'abound' with produce; exports continue to Gulf, Lebanon

AMMAN (Petra) — Despite the apparent increase in the consumption of vegetables and fruits during the holy month of Ramadan, Jordan is continuing its export programmes and is selling between 600 and 1,000 tonnes of agricultural products daily to the traditional markets in the Gulf states and Lebanon, according to Agriculture Marketing Organisation (AMO) Director General Salem Lawzi.

Dr. Lawzi said that the Jordanian markets are continually supplied with vegetables and fruit and their prices Sunday were lower than those in the past week in view of the abundant production.

Referring to the poultry meat, Dr. Lawzi said that the slaughter house in Duleil, near Zarqa, is supplying sufficient quantities to the domestic markets, adding that there was no shortage of poultry meat in Jordan and that its price is fixed by the Ministry of Supply.

At the same time AMO

has decided to import oranges from Lebanon to meet the extra demand on this commodity in the local markets. He said that according to an agreement reached with the Lebanese authorities, Jordan will import 1,000 tonnes of Lebanese oranges during the current season.

Dr. Lawzi said that the Ministry of Supply and the Ministry of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Greater Amman Municipality, decided to run three open air souqs (markets) in Amman suburbs in order to facilitate buying and supplying more amounts of vegetables and fruits to the market during Ramadan.

The three markets, which will open on Monday, are located on Jabal Nuzha by Independence Street, Muqabein, opposite Crown Hotel and Abu Nuseir, opposite the Recreational and Entertainment Park, according to Dr. Lawzi.

At these markets, he said, farmers sell their products directly to the consumers for

at least 20 per cent lower than the regular market prices.

Dr. Lawzi explained that the farmers at the open air markets will not pay a 10 per cent tax on their sales to the Amman Municipality and 30 per cent to the wholesale merchants, and so they can sell at lower prices.

He said both the consumers and the farmers are bound to benefit from the open air markets.

Dr. Lawzi pointed out that a committee made up of members from the municipality and the ministries of agriculture and supply has been set up to monitor the buying and selling operations in these three markets, noting that AMO is studying the prospect of opening other open air markets in other suburbs of the capital.

These teams will be conducting regular inspection visits and will not allow any person other than farmers to offer their products for sale at these souqs, said Dr. Lawzi, adding that the farmers will not be charged any fees on their sales.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILM

★ Film entitled "Jules Et Jim" at the French Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m.

PLAY

★ Play (in Arabic) entitled "You Are Not Yourself" at the Royal Cultural Centre at 9:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition of works by Qasim Al Samir at the Housing Bank Complex Gallery.

★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre. Also showing another exhibition of Arabic Calligraphy.

★ Exhibition of the works of Lebanese artist Amin Al Bashe at Darat Al Funn. Also showing another exhibition entitled "Phase II-Doors and Windows" by Jordanian artist Ghada Dahdaleh and works by contemporary Arab artists.

★ Educational works depicting the life of "Voltaire" at the French Cultural Centre.

★ Exhibition of works by Hala Mahayni at the Petra International Hotel in Aqaba.

Prince Ra'd chairs municipality talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid Sunday chaired a meeting at the Greater Amman Municipality, attended by Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Razzaq Ensour and Amman Mayor Mamdouh Al Abbadi. Prince Ra'd discussed with Dr. Ensour and Dr. Abbadi the requirements for constructions for the handicapped including buildings, entrances, lanes and health facilities. Prince Ra'd stressed the need for applying

article 8 of the law on the handicapped which calls on the parties concerned to facilitate the movement of the handicapped in cities through the development of special designs for buildings. Dr. Abbadi said the Greater Amman Municipality had embarked on several measures designed to facilitate the movement of the handicapped on most road junctions which have been recently expanded, in addition to the newly built roads.

Jordan Times Tel 667171

Strong vote for Jospin raises Socialist chances

PARIS (AFP) — A strong vote for former Education Minister Lionel Jospin as the Socialist candidate in French presidential elections increased his party's chances Sunday as an opinion poll showed the electorate is highly volatile with more than two-thirds of voters undecided.

Mr. Jospin's clear victory over party First Secretary Henri Emmanuelli with nearly 66 per cent of the vote in a Socialist primary restored unity to the party and raised morale after a trail of humiliation that began with its rout in March, 1993 legislative elections at the hands of the conservatives.

The clear result "has swept away the quarrels and the cliques" that had riven the party, said 57-year-old Jospin, calling on it "to rally for an offensive" against conservative favourite Edouard Balladur, the prime minister.

For his part, Mr. Emmanuelli, who at one time said he would resign as party chief if he lost the vote, declared Sunday he would stay on to campaign for Mr. Jospin, known as the "Mr. Clean" of the left.

"It is not pleasant to lose, but it is nothing compared with what is at stake... the future of our country and the future of our people," said Mr. Emmanuelli, 49, adding that he would respect the vote.

Mr. Jospin, a conviction politician from a teaching background, is from the left of the party but came in with the support of the centre-right.

On Sunday he vowed to force Mr. Balladur, who is trying to stay aloof from the rough-and-tumble of the hustings, into campaigning and scoffed at his technocrat origins.

The Socialist candidate, a talented debater, pledged to "debunk" the prime minister's "immobile" record as prime minister. "Mr. Balladur wants us to contemplate the opinion polls and then to be appointed to the Elysee (presidential palace), but not even God could do this," said Mr. Jospin to an ovation.

Official results proclaimed at a special party congress Sunday said Mr. Jospin got 52,250 votes, or 65.85 per cent of the total, compared with Emmanuelli's 27,095

(34.15 per cent). There was a higher than expected turnout — 73.15 per cent of the party's 112,681 paid-up members cast ballots.

Mr. Jospin's victory came as an opinion poll showed that an unprecedented 69 per cent of the French are "don't know" three months ahead of the first round of the presidential on April 23 to replace Socialist President Francois Mitterrand and that the situation could flip for the miles-ahead favourite, 65-year-old Balladur.

The poll, by the IFOP Institute for the Journal Du Dimanche newspaper, also said that 21 per cent of voters said they disliked all of the 11 candidates and would probably abstain.

But Mr. Jospin, with his curt, rigid manner and puritanical reputation, may not be the man to reverse the trend. Recent opinion polls have said that Mr. Jospin would not make it into the second round of the presidential of May 7 — but that was before the Socialist primary.

The party's two best candidates have withdrawn. Former European Commission chief Jacques Delors pulled

out in December even though opinion polls said he would defeat Mr. Balladur.

And popular former Culture Minister Jack Lang withdrew last month after failing to win support from party apparatchiks.

But Mr. Jospin's candidacy should cut the number of "don't-knows" and the decision of the centre-right former Prime Minister Raymond Barre whether or not stand — to be announced later this month — should further reduce the numbers of the undecided.

A joker in the pack for Mr. Jospin is the attitude of failed tycoon Bernard Tapie's Radical Party.

Mr. Tapie, who is ineligible after being declared bankrupt, is detested by Mr. Jospin, who recently said that mortality should be brought back into politics and that "a minimum virtue" and of "honesty" was required.

Mr. Tapie, who at first said Radical would put up a candidate if Mr. Jospin became the Socialist candidate, Saturday offered his support "provided he is open with me and that he openly shakes me by the hand."

Voter apathy marks Kyrgyzstan election

BISHKEK (R) — Kyrgyzstan voters Sunday in its first elections since independence chose a new two-chamber parliament set up to replace the Soviet legislature thrown out last year by President Askar Akayev for blocking his reforms.

Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0200 GMT) and closed at 8 p.m. (1500 GMT). Preliminary results are expected Monday.

Early voting was sluggish, with just 10 per cent of the electorate turning out in the first four hours, the central Election Commission said.

Around 1,000 candidates are standing for the 35-seat Legislative Assembly, a full-time lawmaking body, and the 70-seat People's Assembly, which will meet twice a year.

Early voters at School 24 in Bishkek pored over two ballots listing 30 candidates, including academics, journalists, businessmen and bureaucrats.

One middle-aged voter, Zholdashbek Zhandayev, said he had voted for a businessman standing for the People's Assembly.

"I don't know his programme, but he is a manufacturer and Kyrgyzstan needs consumer goods," he said. "I didn't know anyone standing for the Legislative Assembly so I just made a blind choice," he added.

More than a dozen parties are participating — with the Communists the largest with 40 candidates. But parties have put up less than a fifth of the total runners, leaving most voters to make a rough choice on the basis of name, age or profession.

President Akayev voted mid-morning and told reporters voters faced tough choices because parties had not yet built a wide social base.

He urged voters to turn out in runoffs on Feb. 19 to make sure the necessary 50 per cent participation is achieved to make the elections valid.

"Without doubt this is going to be a transitional parliament because I am sure that we are still not grown up enough to have a professional parliament," he added.

The 50-year-old physicist-turned-president has led this mountain state of 4.5 million on the Chinese frontier through ambitious market reforms since independence in 1991.

But, in a scene reminiscent of former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, he was remained of the reforms' social cost when an old lady berated him that she was not getting her pension and could not make ends meet.

Election observers touring the country reported widespread voter apathy and said they expected turnout to be low.

Jacques Roussellier of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said the elections were poorly organised and the legal framework murky but they were still the most democratic held in Central Asia.

Winter storm hits parts of U.S., disrupts travel

WASHINGTON (R) — A fierce winter storm roared into the northeastern United States Saturday, dumping up to 16 inches (40-cm) of snow and wreaking havoc on travel as airports closed and roads were glazed with sheets of ice.

"This is clearly the biggest storm of the season in a lot of places," said Meteorologist Jim Candor of Accu-Weather Inc. of State College, Pennsylvania.

The storm, which followed a relatively mild start to winter in the U.S. east, also ushered in high winds and freezing temperatures and thousands of air passengers were stranded either at home or in airport terminals.

Travel snafus were lessened because the storm hit on a weekend, but flights were delayed or cancelled up and down the east coast and authorities reported a string of minor accidents on ice-slicked roads.

"They're just fender benders and guys sliding into the barriers," a Massachusetts state trooper said.

New York's La Guardia and John F. Kennedy Airports were ordered closed early Saturday, but reopened after six to eight hours respectively providing limited services. By early afternoon one of JFK's four runways and one of La Guardia's two runways were operational.

New Jersey's Newark Air-

port remained open throughout the night but had limited arrival and departure services. Air traffic was snarled at Philadelphia International Airport.

Boston's Logan Airport was closed early Saturday afternoon but was expected to open later in the day. Baltimore-Washington International was operating only one of its four runways, an airport spokesman said.

Forecasters had given plenty of advance warning about the storm, prompting frenzied shoppers to jam area supermarkets Friday to stock up on food. Authorities in many cities contracted for additional snowplows.

New York City officials had nine inches (23-cm) of snow, which by mid-day had turned to rain.

City officials placed 3,000 sanitation workers on alert to continuously operate 1,850 snowplows and spreaders in an attempt to keep primary roads passable to traffic.

They appealed to people to stay home and keep warm. Those who had to go out were urged to use mass transit.

Snow depths reached over one foot (30-cm) north and west of Philadelphia, with drifts at least twice as deep. An area between Philadelphia and New York was hardest hit, with Princeton, New Jersey hit by 16 inches (40-cm), Mr. Candor said.

Evita enters laser age as Menem launches campaign

BUENOS AIRES (R) — His popularity boosted by Argentine's fear of a Mexico-style crisis, President Carlos Menem has launched his re-election campaign with a huge rally that married laser displays and giant images of Evita Peron.

State television carried the prime-time Saturday night event live for an hour and a half from the Atlantic resort of Mar Del Plata and put attendance at 100,000. Police estimated the crowd at 40,000.

"Our beloved Argentina has become a serious, credible, trustworthy country... which is the centre of attention even for the greatest powers on earth," Mr. Menem said to the thunder of dozens of bass drums beaten by approving supporters.

The Peronist president is seeking a second term to consolidate what he calls the Argentine's "economic miracle" of low inflation and rapid growth. He has increased his lead ahead of the May 14 vote since Mexico devalued its peso in December.

The shock waves that hit Latin America's emerging economies gave him an extra 10 percentage points because voters see him as a guarantee of stability, a poll published Saturday showed.

The poll, commissioned by the government, gave Mr. Menem 57.2 per cent of voting intentions in greater Buenos Aires — home to one-third of Argentina's 33 million population — against 15.8 per cent for the Radical Party of his predecessor, Raul Alfonsín.

A centre-left front that had earlier emerged as a possible

second force came in third in the poll with 14.2 per cent. Bolstered by these figures, Mr. Menem exulted at the formal launch of his ticket, laughing, winking into state television cameras and clapping his hands to the beat of the crowd's rendition of a popular hit by the title of "Matador." "Killer."

His vice-presidential candidate, former Interior Minister Carlos Ruckauf, used Mr. Menem's handling of the fall-out from the Mexican crisis to urge voters to back him again.

"Just now when everything in the Americas shook, when it seemed a monster wave from Mexico was about to sweep it all away, once again the skipper managed to keep the boat on course," he roared. "Menem knows the way."

But Mr. Ruckauf also mentioned unemployment — at more than 12 per cent, one of the weak flanks of the "economic miracle" — and quoted Evita, the legendary first wife of party founder Juan Domingo Peron who roused crowds in his support.

"For us a jobless man is not part of statistics. He is, as Evita taught us, a gaping wound in our heart," Mr. Ruckauf said.

Mr. Menem, irked by the embarrassingly high unemployment figure published last month, has described it as misleading and says he wants the calculation method revised.

"I have no doubts that the coming years too will be years of growth and development," he told the crowd.

"Brothers and sisters, let's win let's win let's win" he urged as a shower of fireworks lit up the night sky.

Gingrich: NASA should have been disbanded

WALESKA, Georgia (R) — U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich said the U.S. space agency NASA should have been disbanded after the Apollo space programme ended in the 1970s.

In a history lecture at Reinhardt College in this small north Georgia town, Mr. Gingrich said he generally favours government-funded science and technology programmes. But he criticised the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for becoming increasingly bureaucratic the longer it survived.

"The government can do basic research and development or the government can come out here and set up the Apollo project," the Georgia Republican said in a lesson on breakthroughs in innovation.

"Remember, NASA was brand new. They built it up, they did it and if they'd disbanded it at that point, I think they'd have been better off."

"You build a project team, you get the job done and then you close it down and start a new project. If you keep people there, they become bureaucratic," he said.

But when asked later what he thinks should be done with NASA now, Mr. Gingrich said he would not favour scrapping the space agency altogether.

"I'm not proposing that we abolish NASA," he said after a town hall meeting in the nearby town of Smyrna.

"I think it ought to be thoroughly overhauled. My point was that if we had a system where you would constantly be reformulating based on missions rather than on a zone, you'd have more talent and more energy."

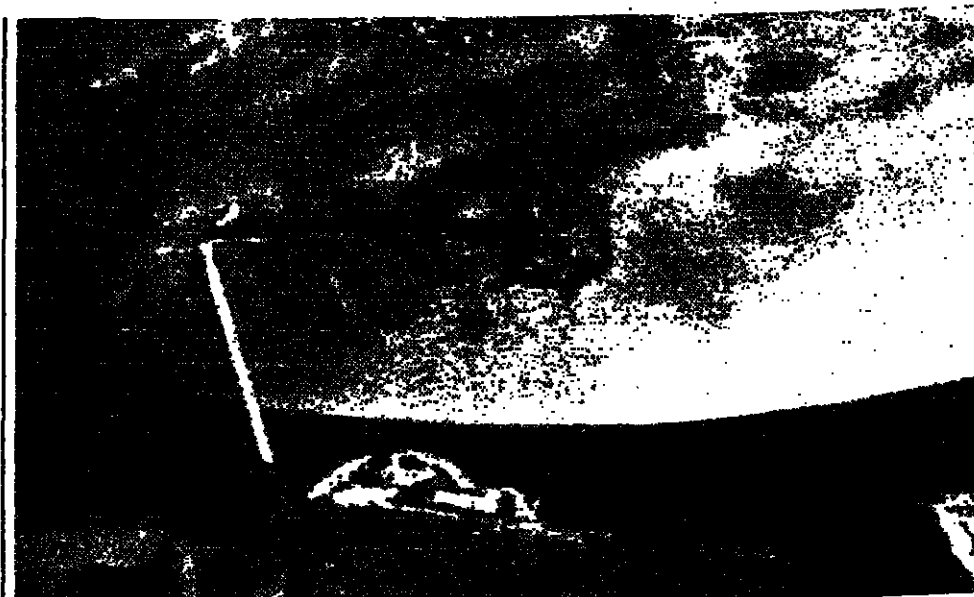
First In His Class, a biography of Mr. Clinton by Washington Post reporter David Maraniss, claims that the then-Arkansas governor gave up his bid for the 1988 party and after his chief of staff Betsy Wright asked him for a list of women he had affairs with.

Mr. Clinton and Ms. Wright reviewed the list twice to assess which women would go public and which would not. Ms. Wright reportedly advised Mr. Clinton after the review not to get into the race.

The womanising issue was a key topic in 1988, with tales of an extramarital affair forcing the leading Democratic contender Gary Hart to relinquish his bid for the presidency.

The issue did not fade for Mr. Clinton when he sought the office in 1992 nor has it subsided since he became president.

Mr. Maraniss also wrote that "She (Wright) was convinced that some state troopers were soliciting women for him and he for them."



The Space Shuttle Discovery is mated over Discovery's cargo bay by the shuttle's robot arm operated by Russian Astronaut Vladimir Titov and U.S. astronaut Janice Voss. The shuttle, with international crew of six, will fly around the Russian space station Mir during their scheduled eight-day mission in space (AFP photo)

Shuttle's 2nd jet leak stopped; close approach to Mir is still threatened

CAFE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — Spouting fuel like a geyser, a leaking thruster on Discovery is threatening to ruin the shuttle's rendezvous with the Russian space station.

Discovery later sprang another thruster leak, this one even bigger, but the crew got that seepage to stop by late Saturday night.

Russian officials were concerned the leaking fuel might damage their orbiting Mir station if Discovery came too close during Monday's rendezvous. NASA flight controllers scrambled to provide as much information about the leak as possible to their Russian counterparts.

Mission Operations Director Randy Stone said NASA will do whatever the Russians want. In the worst case, the shuttle and its crew of six will have to fly around Mir from a distance of about 400 feet (125 metres), he said.

The original plan called for the shuttle approaching as close as 35 feet (10 metres), he said. The original plan called for the shuttle approaching as close as 35 feet (10 metres) as practice for the first shuttle-Mir docking in June.

Shuttle Commander James Wetherbee said that he would be disappointed if he couldn't close in all the way, and that much information would be lost involving navigation and shuttle-handling.

"There are a lot of unknowns, uncertainties with a rendezvous like this," Commander Wetherbee said. If Discovery is limited to 400 feet (125 metres), "then we'll give them what we can."

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) officials insist the June docking by Atlantis will proceed no matter what happens on this mission. At least seven Atlantis-Mir dockings are planned through 1997. Discovery's flight was the dress rehearsal.

The first steering thruster to leak, located at the rear of Discovery, began spewing nitrogen tetroxide shortly after Discovery reached orbit Friday. The amount of leakage has decreased from 2 pounds (1 kg) to a half-pound (225 gr) per hour, but Russian space officials are worried even that much could contaminate the station.

The second leak popped up Saturday afternoon in a thruster at the front of discovery; this jet was losing 6

pounds (2.7 kg) of propellant per hour when the crew shut it down for several hours. The jet had stopped leaking when they turned it back on. In all, the shuttle has 38 of the type of thrusters that were having trouble.

Liquid propellant turns into ice when it encounters the vacuum of space, and the small particles typically do not attach to anything, Mr. Stone said. The leak poses no safety hazard to the shuttle or crew and doesn't affect flight duration.

"We have a relative degree of comfort that the contamination would not be an issue if we were on the other side of the fence. But we have got to arrive at that conclusion together before we would make the commitment to go close," Mr. Stone said.

There's always a chance that the failed jet will stop leaking altogether, Mr. Stone said. There's no way to shut it off without disabling the two other jets in the same cluster, one of them critical for a close approach.

Com. Wetherbee said that most of the time the propellant leaking from the first failed thruster looks like "a very slow snowstorm."



The first woman space shuttle pilot Ellison S. Sizemore goes through a switch check list on the photo) (AFP photo)

Haiti parliament ends turbulent tenure

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — The tenure of Haiti's fractious Chamber of Deputies came to an end Saturday, drawing the curtain on four years of turbulence marked by corruption, gunfire and fistfights, diplomats and politicians said.

The only unblemished business left was the closing ceremony at the run-down Legislative Palace and the deputies were to meet later in the day to preside over a final curtain fall that few people were sad to see come.

The entire 83-seat Chamber of Deputies and two-thirds of the 27-man Senate are up for reelection.

"The parliament is a mess," one American diplomat said recently. The diplomat, who described the lawmakers as "dysfunctional," was in the chamber various times during the last few years and saw some amazing performances.

A year ago, U.S. Ambassador William Swing was quickly hustled out of the chamber by his bodyguards

after scuffles broke out between rival politicians.

On other occasions guns have been drawn and in parliament's blackest day, shortly after the 1991 coup that deposed President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, soldiers burst into the chamber and sprayed it with gunfire.

Less violent but no less embarrassing is the chamber's parliamentary record over the last four years. Few serious laws have been passed and those that were required a struggle.

Stories of past womanising haunt Clinton anew

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A new book claiming that President Bill Clinton's alleged extra-marital affairs prevented him from seeking the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988 has put the White House on the defensive.

First In His Class, a biography of Mr. Clinton by Washington Post reporter David Maraniss, claims that the then-Arkansas governor gave up his bid for the 1988 party and after his chief of staff Betsy Wright asked him for a list of women he had affairs with.

Mr. Clinton and Ms. Wright reviewed the list twice to assess which women would go public and which would not. Ms. Wright reportedly advised Mr. Clinton after the review not to get into the race.

The womanising issue was a key topic in 1988, with tales of an extramarital affair forcing the leading Democratic contender Gary Hart to relinquish his bid for the presidency.

The issue did not fade for Mr. Clinton when he sought the office in 1992 nor has it subsided since he became president.

Mr. Maraniss stood by his story, saying he had interviewed Ms. Wright several times and met with her prior to the work's release to review the sections of the book with which she was involved.

"Her response at the time was that I had fairly and accurately reported what she had said," Mr. Maraniss told the Post.

Jennifer Flowers claimed during the 1992 race that she had had a previous relationship with Mr. Clinton.

Paula Jones filed suit against Mr. Clinton last year, claiming he made a sexual advance toward her during a 1991 business meeting in Little Rock Arkansas when he was still governor and she was a state employee.

Mr. Clinton ran most of the campaign by downplaying the allegations. Media coverage finally forced him to hold a news conference with his wife in which admitted that their marriage had "some

problems".

The Jones suit is among the key cases that have forced the Clintons to establish a special donation fund for legal defence.

The legal fund raised \$608,000 between last June and December, but the Clintons still owe nearly \$1 million, the fund reported Friday.

The book also shed more light on another touchy issue for Mr. Clinton: His military draft history.

As a student in the late 1960s Mr. Clinton sought to join the Reserve Officers' Training Corps. By joining the group, he was able to avoid being drafted into service in Vietnam.

According to the book, when Mr. Clinton was running for the House of Representatives in 1974 he asked an ROTC leader to destroy a compromising letter on the issue.

However Mr. Clinton did not know a copy of the letter existed and that document came back to haunt him in the 1992 race.

Prince of Wales goes fox-hunting

GRITTLETON, England (AFP) — Prince Charles went fox-hunting near his home in southwest England, despite protests from animal rights campaigners in a week that saw the movement claim its first "martyr". Around 100 hunters, including Prince and Princess Michael of Kent, took part in the hunt. The prince aroused anger in October when he took his sons the Prince William and Henry on a fox-hunt, prompting parliamentarians to ask the government to make it illegal to take children to a hunt. An animal rights protester, Jill Philips, was killed Wednesday at Coventry Airport in the English Midlands when she fell under the wheels of a truck transporting calves for export to veal producers in France and Holland.

Police probe bugging claim in Diana court case

LONDON (R) — British police are probing claims that someone bugged a defence lawyer's phone call in a case brought by Princess Diana against a former gymnasium owner. Princess Diana is expected to appear in court later this month when she sues New Zealander Bryce Taylor and Mirror Group newspapers over photos of her exercising at a London fitness club. "We can confirm that a firm of solicitors, Simons, Muirhead and Burton, have made a complaint alleging that a telephone conversation involving a member of their staff was illegally intercepted and recorded," a police spokesman said Saturday. This followed claims in the Mail on Sunday that transcripts of an hour-long conversation about Princess Diana had been offered for sale to newspapers. It was between Mr. Taylor's lawyer, Razi Mirestandari, and a woman hired to trace potential witnesses, the paper said. Mr. Mirestandari was quoted as saying: "I find this very sinister. I am worried that my opponents may get to know everything we have been doing." Princess Diana, separated from her husband Prince Charles, is due to be the first member of the British royal family to appear in court for almost a century.

Vicar teaches clergy how to combat satanism

LONDON (R) — A "ghost-buster" vicar who works as an official church exorcist is to run a special course to teach fellow clergymen how to combat satanism. "My course is designed for young clergymen who are now facing this new challenge known to older churchmen for many years now. More and more people are now dabbling in the occult with sad and frightening results," Tim Willis said. Willis, who is launching the conference later this month, handles about 30 inquiries a year in the northern English diocese of York from worried callers with reports about ghosts and evil spirits. He was once called to a fishing trawler after the crew reported seeing ghosts and refused to pull to sea.

Conductor quits after 'mafioso' phone threats

NAPLES, Italy (AP) — One of Italy's best-known classical musicians tried to shrug off bad reviews of the opera he was conducting. But he said there was one suggestion he didn't dare ignore — an apparent mob threat to leave. Salvatore Accardo left the podium Thursday as conductor of Mozart's Don Giovanni at Naples' San Carlo Theatre after receiving phone calls, newspapers reported Saturday. The 53-year-old violinist described the messages, in which he was told in a thick Neapolitan accent to "get out," as "an unmistakable mafia-type threat." Police have opened an investigation. But exactly why the mob would target Accardo was not clear, and suspicion has been raised that Accardo's sudden departure is a response to the whistles from the audience and the barbs from opera critics. His contract with San Carlo runs until August. The theatre's superintendent, Francesco Canessa, gave short shrift to Accardo's claims. "Accardo is physically and psychologically drained, and hasn't been able to get over what rightly or wrongly, has been a flop for him," he said.

Prince of Wales goes fox-hunting
GRITTLETON, England (AP) — Prince Charles went fox-hunting in the Cotswolds on Sunday, despite protests from rights campaigners that saw the prince's first "marriage" to Princess Diana. The prince was seen on a horse, wearing a red hunting jacket, and was accompanied by a large entourage. The hunt was part of a tradition in the Cotswolds, and the prince was seen to be in good spirits. The hunt was held in the Cotswolds, a beautiful area of rolling hills and villages. The prince was seen to be in good spirits, and the hunt was held in the Cotswolds, a beautiful area of rolling hills and villages.

Police probe bugging claim: Diana courted
LONDON (R) — Police are probing a claim that a former member of the royal household bugged the prince and princess. The claim was made by a former member of the royal household, who alleged that they had bugged the prince and princess. The police are currently investigating the claim, and have not yet made any arrests. The claim was made by a former member of the royal household, who alleged that they had bugged the prince and princess. The police are currently investigating the claim, and have not yet made any arrests.

Vicar teaches clergy how to combat satanic
LONDON (R) — A vicar has been teaching his clergy how to combat satanic influences. The vicar, who is a member of the Church of England, has been teaching his clergy how to combat satanic influences. The vicar, who is a member of the Church of England, has been teaching his clergy how to combat satanic influences. The vicar, who is a member of the Church of England, has been teaching his clergy how to combat satanic influences.

Conductor quit after mafioso phone threats
NAPLES, Italy (AP) — A conductor has quit his job after receiving phone threats from a mafioso. The conductor, who is a member of the Italian Opera House, has quit his job after receiving phone threats from a mafioso. The conductor, who is a member of the Italian Opera House, has quit his job after receiving phone threats from a mafioso. The conductor, who is a member of the Italian Opera House, has quit his job after receiving phone threats from a mafioso.



One of the first inhabitants of the village of Kekerdom returning in the Ootjipolder. Carrying his few belongings in a bag he passes the dyke which recently kept the water of the swollen River Waal from his home. All people living in the polder were evacuated due to the threat of the dyke breaking (AFP photo)

Majority of Dutch flood evacuees return home

AMSTERDAM (R) — Most Dutch flood evacuees returned to their homes Sunday after authorities declared the majority of dikes around the downstream Maas and Waal rivers safe. Swollen rivers had forced some 250,000 people to evacuate last week in the country's worst natural disaster in 40 years, but the swiftly receding water levels had already allowed around 65,000 people to go back home Friday and Saturday. Some 180,000 people in and around the towns of Tiel and Culemborg, declared safe Sunday, were welcomed by improvised road signs which read "welcome home, community of Tiel" and "mobile police unit salutes Ootjipolder." Those returning home expressed their gratitude to the army and emergency services who had toiled all week to strengthen dikes and guard empty homes against the threat of looting. Relieved inhabitants of the Maas and Waal region, which was re-opened Saturday, put up signs thanking their fellow countrymen. "Thank you Holland," one said. Officials said water levels on the Rhine, Maas and Waal rivers were now falling at a rate of 60 cm (24 inches) a day and had dropped two metres since they peaked Wednesday. The last 15,000 evacuees, primarily from around Gorinchem, the most western part of the evacuated regions, would probably be allowed home Monday, the mayor of Gorinchem said. But a dike inspector said the Waal River dikes around Gorinchem had been ripped apart due to the intense pressure of the swollen rivers and the sudden drop in water levels. "The water pressure in that dike is still very high and it will take a few days before it is as safe as it was before the floods," he told national news.

Sarajevo blast anniversary marked quietly

SARAJEVO (R) — The people of Sarajevo marked the first anniversary Sunday of the Merkalet Market massacre, a bloody city-centre mortar blast that galvanized international will to intensify United Nations peace efforts in Bosnia. No official ceremonies were scheduled and shoppers thronged the food market where on Feb. 5, 1994, a total of 68 people died from the impact of a mortar bomb in the worst single atrocity of the war. The attack set in train diplomatic and military peace initiatives which obliged Serbs, under threat of NATO air strikes, to remove most of their tanks and siege guns from around the city and after many months of mediation culminated in a four-month ceasefire that took effect on Jan. 1 this year. Fighting now is mainly confined to the northwestern Bihac pocket which troops of the Muslim-led Bosnian government army are defending against rebel Muslims armed and aided by Serbs. The Sarajevo newspaper Oslobođenje regretted that the international mediation, although it has ended much of the bloodletting, has made little diplomatic progress. "The aftermath of the Merkalet Market is maybe the only example of when the soulless world made a serious threat to the criminals," it said in an editorial. "If the criminals had really been frightened, Sarajevo wouldn't be an occupied city. Bosnia would be a free country. But that's not the way it is." Muslims and Serbs blamed each other for firing the fatal mortar bomb and U.N. peacekeepers said their investigation was unable to determine which side was responsible. The incident occurred just days before the opening of the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, and this helped the world remember that just 10 years earlier the same games had been staged in Sarajevo, then part of the Yugoslav Federation. As Sarajevans haggled Sunday over the price of vegetables at the market, and the parents of one victim laid a lone wreath, commanders of the Muslim, Serb and Croat armies were due to meet United Nations officials to discuss reinforcing the ceasefire. The rivals were expected to discuss mapping of the front lines so that U.N. peacekeepers could be deployed between them. U.N. sources said the outcome would show whether military commanders were serious about enforcing the ceasefire. In Zagreb, the chief of staff of the Croatian army defended his government's decision to evict U.N. peacekeepers from rebel Serb enclaves on Croatian territory but denied that the move was intended to provoke war. Croatia has refused to renew the U.N. mandate that expires on March 31 and has given the United Nations until June 30 to remove its 12,000 men from the third of Croatian soil which the Croatian Serbs hold. The Serbs, who fear repression if they submit themselves to rule from Zagreb, have set up the Republic of Serb Krajina (RSK), which effectively exists under U.N. protection. Zagreb believes they will be more amenable to negotiations if the U.N. buffer is removed. Gen. Boberko told Reuters in an interview: "Croatia is made out to be less interested in peace and more interested in solving problems with other means, as if cancelling the U.N. mandate meant making way for renewed conflict. It's just the opposite." In Munich, Germany, leaders of Croatia and Bosnia adopted a nine-point plan here Sunday to save their Muslim-Croatian federation from breaking apart, talks chairman and U.S. diplomat Richard Holbrooke said. The U.S.-brokered plan provides for the nomination of an international mediator to solve differences at the heart of the federation, created last March. The five-power "contact group" on the Bosnian conflict was also meeting in parallel in Munich Sunday to try to breathe new life into general Bosnian peace efforts. Croatian and Bosnian representatives agreed to abide by the decisions of an appointed mediator who is to be nominated by a person chosen by common accords between the parties, said Mr. Holbrooke, who spoke of an "excellent" meeting. In addition, a standing committee will be created in Sarajevo to supervise the state of the federation. Meanwhile, the two sides will provide experts in constitutional law to shore up the federation's institutions and mediation sub-groups will be detailed to iron out differences between "specific communities" with a view to extending cooperation with the European Union.

Walesia plunges Polish politics into turmoil

WARSAW (R) — President Lech Walesia, having plunged Poland's entire political scene into chaos, is now waiting to see what rewards he can reap. Mr. Walesia threatened late last week to dissolve parliament unless it ditched leftist Prime Minister Waldemar Pawlak. Then he flew home to the port city of Gdansk for the weekend, leaving Mr. Pawlak and his ex-communist coalition partners quarrelling angrily and parliament in turmoil. "The president will definitely not dissolve parliament this weekend. On Monday he will think it over," Mr. Walesia's lawyer Lech Falandysz told a radio interviewer Friday. On Saturday the lower house decided by 376 to 16, with 16 abstentions, that if Mr. Walesia tried to dismiss parliament using the controversial legal grounds he has cited, they would defy him and haul him up before a special court. Throughout the weekend Poles were speculating what Mr. Walesia would do, and trying to understand why. Mr. Walesia accuses Mr. Pawlak's government of stalling reforms, of being plagued by scandal, and of trying to usurp his authority. But many commentators suggest the former Solidarity Union leader's chief concern is presidential elections due late this year, in which he intends to seek a second five-year term.

Daughter: China's destiny is out of Deng's hands

PARIS (AP) — The daughter of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping said that her father was in good health for a 91-year-old man but that the destiny of China was already in the hands of a new team. Deng Maomao, also known as Deng Rong, said she hoped that foreign nations would begin to shift their attention more to her father's successors... who are entering a transition period of the nation's political direction. Mr. Deng is already retired. "The destiny of China is now in the hands of the new team," she said, adding, "I hope our foreign friends can show more concern about the new team." Mr. Deng's daughter, in an interview last month with the New York Times, said her father was ailing and unable to walk, causing concern in foreign capitals about the Chinese leadership. She later backtracked on that somber analysis in favour of softer wording about her father's health that followed the government's approach. Deng Maomao stressed "the rules of nature" in speaking of her father's health, as she did in a brief interview with Agence France-Presse, the French news agency. "It is impossible that he becomes younger and younger. He will become older and older," the agency quoted her as saying. Deng Maomao arrived in Paris earlier Saturday. She was to go on to the United States Feb. 10, but made no mention of that visit in her TV interview. Her book covers the first 45 years of her father's life, including a five-year stay in Paris when he "opted for communism." She said that period proved "a very important influence" in his career. A second book that will deal with contemporary China is planned, she said.

Ecuador claims more Peruvian attacks as Rio talks drag on

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) — Less than a day after Peru and Ecuador agreed in principle to end their border dispute, Ecuador claimed Peruvian jungle fighters had attacked its border posts again. Skirmishes occurred Saturday in the jungled mountains along the border 220 miles (350 kilometres) southeast of Quito, Ecuadorian officials said. They described the clashes as of "lower intensity" than previous fighting and said they had no information on casualties. Peruvian officials had no comment on the reports. Peru sent soldiers experienced in fighting Maoist guerrillas to the disputed region last week. The attacks came a day after negotiators from Peru and Ecuador, meeting in Brazil, announced they had reached agreement in principle to end the 10-day border conflict and set up a demilitarized zone. The agreement was contingent on the presidents of both nations giving final approval to the details. Ecuador had agreed to a simultaneous withdrawal of troops but Peru wants the Ecuadorians to withdraw first, said Ecuadorian spokesman Santiago Aguilar. In Rio De Janeiro, Ecuador's main representative to the talks, Marcelo Fernandez De Cordova, said his nation was "deeply concerned with the delay in reaching a definitive suspension of hostilities." But Peru's chief delegate, Eduardo Ponce, responded that the Ecuadorians were "trying to gain international sympathy by presenting themselves as victims." Antonio Barros Simoes, a Brazilian Foreign Ministry spokesman, said Saturday evening in Rio that negotiators set new proposals to the presidents of Peru and Ecuador earlier in the day, and said talks would continue Sunday. "We have received requests from both governments, particularly from one,



Brazilian Vice Foreign Minister Sebastiao Do Rego Barros (left) talks to the press during a break in negotiations dealing with the Peru-Ecuador border dispute at the Itamaraty Palace in Rio De Janeiro. Representatives of the guarantor countries of the 1941 peace treaty between Peru and Ecuador, Juan Jose Urquiza (2nd-left) of Argentina, Fabio Vio (3rd-left) of Chile, Alexander Watson (2nd-right) of the U.S., and Mr. Barros are continuing their meetings to find a diplomatic solution to the dispute (AFP photo)

for more time to consider the latest proposals," Mr. Barros said, without elaborating. Inside the negotiating room, about 10 weary-eyed negotiators from the United States, Chile, Argentina and Brazil sat around a rectangular table covered with a detailed map of the disputed area, empty cups of coffee, crumpled paper and ashtrays filled with cigarette butts. At least 20 people have been killed in fighting that erupted Jan. 26 over an unmarked 50-mile (80-kilometre) portion of the border. The conflict over the area, which may contain gold, uranium and oil, stems from a 1941 war that Ecuador lost. Each side claims the other started the latest flareup. Ecuador says eight of its soldiers have died in the fighting and two are missing and believed dead. Peru acknowledges it has lost 11 soldiers but claims to have killed about 43 Ecuadorian soldiers. One Peruvian civilian was killed after stepping on a land mine. Both sides have mined the border area. Reporters who have visited the area say the Ecuadorian troops are dug into the mountains and have honeycombed the terrain with tunnels. Peru contends the entire 160-kilometre border was established in a 1942 agreement. Ecuador declared the agreement null in 1960, before the border was fully marked. The agreement was guaranteed by the United States, Argentina, Chile and Brazil. Skirmishes also occurred in the area in 1981. Peru and Ecuador mutually accuse each other of attacking posts with their territory, but they have taken sharply different tactics on how to tell the world their side of the border conflict. Ecuador, apparently well-prepared for the hostilities, has bombed the media with official communiques, interviews with high-level officials and trips to the front along its border with Peru. "The coverage of information has constituted one of the pillars to confront the Peruvian aggression on the frontier," a statement from Ecuador's National Communications Secretariat said. "It is being said Ecuador is winning the information war." For its part, Peru accuses Ecuador of carrying out a well-managed campaign of disinformation aimed at portraying Lima as the "aggressor from the south," a Goliath trying to bully its smaller neighbour. "It is obvious we are dealing with a campaign of information intoxication on the part of the Ecuadorian Armed Forces," said Peru's army chief General Nicolas Hermoza Thursday in his first press briefing since hostilities broke out a week earlier. But Peruvian officials remain huddled with the president behind closed doors. The joint chiefs of staff has issued two official communiques since the fighting began. When Gen. Hermoza did speak, he took no questions. The following day, his Ecuadorian counterpart called a press briefing to "categorically deny" most of Gen. Hermoza's statements. Both sides have offered varying casualty tolls.

N. Irish unionists put on election footing

BELFAST (R) — Protestant Ulster Unionist leader James Molyneux has put his party on an election footing in a determined bid to block Dublin's involvement in British-ruled Northern Ireland. Raising the stakes in a row that could bring down Prime Minister John Major's minority government, Mr. Molyneux has ordered his constituency parties to pick candidates in all 17 parliamentary seats in the province. Party sources confirmed Mr. Molyneux was ready to withdraw support from the British government if it advanced plans from its talks with Dublin to set up a powerful cross-border authority. But Gerry Adams, president of the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) political wing Sinn Fein, warned Mr. Major not to dilute the peace plan to ensure his own political survival. Mr. Adams said there was a risk Mr. Major might seek to water down terms of an Anglo-Irish peace plan to placate the Unionists on whose votes the government is heavily dependent. He issued a statement at the end of a turbulent week in which Mr. Major was warned by Unionist MPs that they would bring down his minority government if the peace plan threatened their cherished British status. Mr. Major was forced to address the nation to calm their fears after a newspaper leak said the plan envisaged cross-border bodies which would bring Northern Ireland much closer to reunification with Ireland. "There is a grave danger at this time that John Major may attempt to placate the Unionists while paying lip service to the need for change," Mr. Adams said. "His concern is to survive as British prime minister and to lead his party into government, even a coalition one, after the next election," he added. Unionists hold 13 seats in the British parliament where Mr. Major heads what is technically a minority administration after a rebellion by right-wing conservatives against his European Union policies. It was thought to be the first time Mr. Adams had raised the spectre of a coalition government if Mr. Major's is brought down and echoed fears in Irish nationalist circles that his domestic problems might set the peace process back radically. The Anglo-Irish initiative is at a critical stage, waiting for the two governments to agree on a so-called framework document setting out the next phase of what they launched in December 1993. That plan lured the IRA into declaring a halt to its 25-year war against British rule, and was followed by a truce by Protestant loyalist gunmen fighting to keep it. Mr. Adams called on Britain to begin new all-party talks as soon as possible — Britain has yet to hold official talks with Sinn Fein, and wants IRA and loyalist arms surrendered before convening any new forum. The framework steps are expected to include cross-border bodies to rationalise economic cooperation between the two Irish neighbours and to foster new north-south trust. Unionists fear that they will be run by executive bodies which will dilute their sovereignty and nudge the province closer to reunification with the Catholic Irish Republic.

Power battle in Indian Congress moves to climax

NEW DELHI (R) — The battle for power in India's ruling Congress Party moves towards a climax this week with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao expected to expel his arch-rival Arjun Singh for anti-party activities. The power struggle is being played out against a backdrop of sagging party electoral fortunes, with Congress facing a major challenge this week in statewide polls in its traditional stronghold of Maharashtra. "The politics of dissension and dissidence should be thrown away," Mr. Rao said Sunday as he stomped the campaign trail in the western state of Maharashtra. Mr. Singh, who resigned as human resources minister on Dec. 24, has accused Mr. Rao of ignoring the Muslims and lower castes that have traditionally supported the Congress Party. The former party number two has become a focus for dissent in Congress. But his support remains patchy, and he is unlikely to be able to block a decision to expel him by the party disciplinary committee, which is dominated by Rao loyalists. The committee suspended Mr. Singh on Jan. 24, saying he had capitalised on Congress election reverse in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to advance his own political ambitions. It later presented him with a formal "charge-sheet" accusing him of anti-party and anti-government activities, giving Mr. Singh four days to answer. Mr. Rao later extended the time limit for a response. Mr. Singh has said he will answer the charges, which he calls "totally misconceived and delightfully vague," on Monday. The disciplinary committee will consider his response Tuesday, and Mr. Rao is expected to direct that he be expelled. Indian commentators are agreed that Mr. Singh will find it much more difficult once he has been expelled to capture the party as did former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Few credit Mr. Singh with the stature of Mrs. Gandhi within the party. But many party grandees are awaiting the results of elections in six states this month and next before deciding which way to jump. Defeats for Congress in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the two states it holds where a vote is taking place, would leave the ruling controlling just a handful of states, with the two biggest, Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, in the hands of Singh loyalists. With fears growing of a Congress debacle general elections due by June 1996, the pressure on Mr. Rao to step aside would then increase dramatically. Mr. Singh is not the only possible contender for the party leadership. His current ally N.D. Tiwari, the former Congress chief in India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, is also waiting in the wings and could benefit from Mr. Singh's expulsion. But Mr. Singh is not going to be squeezed out without a fight. This weekend he produced one of his trump cards, in the shape of Sonia Gandhi, widow of the assassinated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Italian-born Sonia is now the senior member of the Nehru-Gandhi family that has run the party and ruled India for much of its post-independence history and still commands almost religious loyalty from much of the Congress rank-and-file. Her decision Saturday night to attend an annual party in New Delhi given Mr. Singh, where last year Mr. Rao was the chief guest, sent a clear message of the views of the Gandhi dynasty. The Congress Party is expected to suffer a setback in crucial elections in the country's most industrialised state of Maharashtra, according to an opinion poll published Sunday. But Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar dis-

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
جريدة الأردن السياسية المستقلة المنشورة بالإنجليزية من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
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Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,

University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 667171/6, 670141-4

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Stop inhuman trade

INDIA'S DECISION Saturday to ban the sale of human organs brings to the fore a grave human rights problem that remained brushed under the carpet for so long. The bold Indian step came in the wake of the arrest of hospital employees for "forcing" some unemployed people to donate their kidneys for patients outside the country in return for money and promises of job opportunities.

In recent years, the trade in human organs from developing countries to rich nations has reached almost endemic proportions ever since organ transplant became medically possible. Many efforts were made in the past to curb this inhuman phenomenon but with very little success. Human rights watchers have repeatedly portrayed a horrific picture of poor children being smuggled from one end of the world to the other for the purpose of transplanting their organs into the bodies of those who can afford the operation. Poor adults have also felt easy prey to international gangs engaged in organ trade. This is not the same as donors consenting to giving a kidney to another patient in dire need of the organ. Rather it is an illegal trade by which the economic conditions of some people are being exploited by "forcing" them to sell their organs to the rich in the developed world. There must be countries other than India that have also outlawed the trafficking in human organs for financial gains. What is lacking still is a coordinated international effort in which all countries would cooperate to check the expanding trade in human organs. Children in particular are most vulnerable, especially those who became known as "street children." Here in the Middle East, there is also a pressing need to work out a regional agreement on this subject before it becomes too late. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights is presently convening in Geneva to address a long list of human rights issues. It would be most opportune to call for an urgent debate on the subject of trading in human organs during this year's session. Trading in human parts is one symptom of the relationship between the rich North and the poor South. The North cannot possibly convince the South of the universality of human rights if issues like this are not addressed and corrected. Exploitation of the poor, especially of the poor's health, is one of the worst violations of human rights.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily Sunday commented on a visit to Jordan by Omani Foreign Minister Yousef Ben Alawi and his talks with His Majesty King Hussein and Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker by saying that the visit falls within the framework of an effort on the part of Oman and Jordan to coordinate their positions regarding the establishment of solidarity among Arab states. Before the Omani minister, Palestine leader Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak visited and talks with them mainly focused on the manner in which the Arab states can regain their unified ranks, the paper said. Jordan's participation in the Arab-Israeli summit in Cairo was another milestone in the Kingdom's continued efforts to rally Arab ranks on all fronts at this crucial stage in the region's history, it continued. The paper noted that Jordan is not confining itself to the peace treaty with Israel and is giving due attention to relations with the other Arab states, which must be strengthened so that Jordan's position can be bolstered in the face of any challenge. The paper said that it is clear that Jordan has not sufficed itself with the peace treaty with Israel and is clearly seeking ways aimed at securing a comprehensive peace on all Israeli Arab tracks.

A columnist in Al Dstour daily Sunday demanded that stricter measures be imposed on merchants dealing in basic foodstuffs to stem the spiralling rise in prices. Mohammad Daoud said that despite the declared measures which the Ministry of Supply has promised to take to bridge prices and thwart the merchants' manipulations including the publication of their names and addresses in the local press, nothing has materialised and the prices continue to rise adding to the misery of the needy and the limited income families.

Human Rights File

By Waleed Sa'di

Homosexuality justified!

THERE ARE increasing calls in many Western countries to outlaw discrimination between people on the basis of sexual orientation. Gays and lesbians have been accepted more and more as partners enjoying equal rights as heterosexual married people. Recent court decisions have gone as far as allowing state family support services to "married" homosexuals on par with those available to legally married people. Recently a Canadian court has ruled in favour of a gay couple by accepting their application for a legal custody over a child to raise as a "family." Closer to home, Israel's Supreme court has also moved in a recent decision to discard differential treatment between homosexuals and heterosexuals, and in the process precipitated a storm in the country with many political leaders accusing the court of eroding the Jewish character of the country.

This trend is also reaching international human rights bodies where there is also an increasing call for according homosexuals and heterosexuals equal treatment. While the battle within international fora on this issue is far from being over, recent medical evidence appears to strengthen the hands of those who call for equal treatment to all kinds of sexual relationships or partnerships. The scientific findings on this point seem to corroborate the hypothesis that sexual orientation is genetically determined with individuals having no choice in the matter. In this vein it was found that brains of people prone to homosexual activity have something that is absent from the brains of "normal" people.

If this new scientific discovery is further corroborated, then there is every reason not to condemn people with "abnormal" sexual orientation and to end discrimination against them. This issue will surely dominate human rights debates in the upcoming years with the Western countries pushing harder than ever to eradicate discrimination

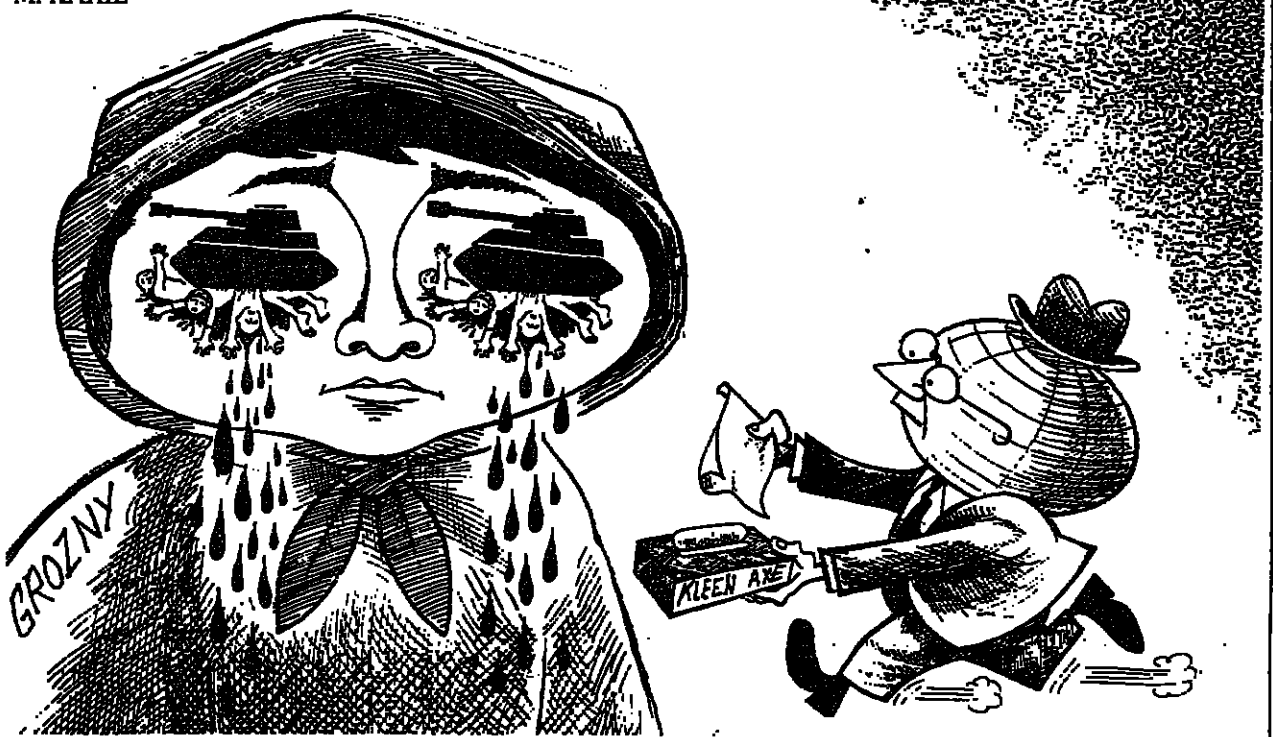
against gays and lesbians. This trend is bound to put human rights activists at loggerheads with traditionalists who still believe that homosexuality is promoted by environmental considerations and their sexual behaviours are condemnable by all monotheistic religions.

Of course, such a debate has no room in our society since our list of human rights priorities has not reached that level. Yet sooner or later, we will have to discuss this controversial subject out in the open because we also have amongst us many homosexuals whose treatment may have to be reexamined. The debate would not be so easy, especially since it would necessarily have many religious and social overtones attached to it. Yet it is never too early to start thinking about this subject.

To begin with, we cannot expect to endorse the new Western point of view on the subject in a precipitous way. It took Western culture many generations to move towards its present course. We should continue to discourage homosexuality but we should also begin the process of understanding it better. Above all, we may begin to view it not so much as an evil but rather as a disease or rather as an aberration in social and biological conduct that is treatable. As long as there is credible medical evidence that would shed more light on the homosexual phenomenon so that we start to view those of us who are part of it not as culpable people but rather as a group of people who are afflicted by a biological disorder over which they have no control.

Of course we are not talking here of people who commit such acts in a violent way or against minors. Such people should continue to be penalised exactly the same way as normal people who commit violent sexual crimes. In the final analysis, though, what counts most is awareness of the problem, its extent and how best to deal with it. Sweeping the issue under the carpet is not exactly the most sensible way of dealing with it.

M. KAHIL



Food irradiation way for future

By Ala'a Taher

WITH THE population explosion in our world today, world food needs continue to escalate as problems in food storage and distribution arise. Since early times, the most sought-after technology for food was its preservation. Food preservation methods in developing countries are not fully evolved, resulting in immense food losses. Even in industrial nations, the pursuit for alternative methods for food preservation continues. Over a third of the world's production of food is lost as a result of inefficient storage, rapid ripening, bacterial contamination and insect infestation. Studies indicate that such losses amount to millions of tonnes per year, valued at billions of dollars.

Throughout history, research has been exhaustive on the problem of food contamination. Food borne disease have claimed many lives worldwide. The United Nations' joint expert Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Health Organisation (WHO) committee on food safety stated that "illness due to contaminated food is perhaps the most widespread health problem in the contemporary world and an important cause of reduced economic productivity."

This is where food irradiation plays a prominent role. It is a process that has countless applications in the food industry. This process is used to preserve food, avoid food losses after harvesting, and prevent the spread of food borne disease.

The name by itself can cause misleading fears to the consumer. This article will attempt to clarify false fables and explain why food irradiation could be vital to developing countries like Jordan.

Food irradiation is the treatment of food by a cer-

tain kind of energy. The process involves the exposure of the food product to minute dosages of radiation. This ionizing radiation prevents the division of living cells, such as bacteria, and cells of higher organisms.

Everything in our environment, including food, contains traces of radiation, commonly called "background radiation". When foodstuffs are irradiated, no residue of radiation is detected and it does not turn the product radioactive. In comparison to the level of radioactivity naturally present in food, the dosage amount is 200,000 times smaller. Panels of doctors, health officials and governmental agencies have concluded after years of research that food irradiation is perfectly harmless and causes no health hazard to the consumer. In a definitive statement, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued the following:

"Because no evidence has been submitted to contradict FDA's finding that irradiation of food does not cause the food to become radioactive, no further discussion of this issue is necessary."

In 1980 the FAO, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the WHO stated:

"The irradiation of any food commodity up to an overall average dose of 10kGy presents no toxicological hazard; hence toxicological testing of foods so treated is no longer required."

Currently, over 37 countries, including some Arab states, are utilising this process and each year new governments are approving it.

This process is extensively used to prolong the shelf life of food. Perishable food shelf life is extended by the termination of microorganisms that cause spoilage or product deterioration. De-

pending on the amount of dosage the products are exposed to, meat, poultry, fish and many other perishable foods may be stored safely for long periods, with or without refrigeration.

Exposure of fruits and vegetables to low dose radiation, slows down the ripening, again extending the shelf life of the product. For example, this procedure increases the shelf life of mangoes for one week and bananas for two weeks. In addition, this procedure results in the synchronisation of the ripening process. Low dose radiation also inhibits sprouting of potatoes, yams, onions, and garlic. Spoilage caused by sprouting or germination is terminated and the food can be stored for longer periods of time throughout the season.

Food irradiation is also used for sterilising foodstuffs. In Jordan, 394 cases of food poisoning have been reported in 1993. This statistic represents only 1-5 per cent of the actual cases, most of which go unreported. Food borne diseases, food infection and intoxication are of major concern to the food industry. Salmonella outbreaks, Botulism, mold diseases, viruses and parasites are all examples that lead to various illnesses. Treating food with irradiation has shown a significant decrease in our exposure to food borne pathogens and microbial contamination.

Other functions of food irradiation range from disinfecting insects in wheat and wheat powder to extending shelf life of potatoes. In addition, it also serves to decontaminate spices and dry vegetable seasoning, control parasites in non-processed meat cuts, and control of illness-causing microorganisms in poultry and meat.

Some other processes can achieve a preservation effect, but the quality of

flavour, texture and colour declines. To name one example, in the canning process, to sterilise and preserve the product, the cans are exposed to high temperatures which reduces the texture and flavour components. On the other hand, irradiation produces a shelf-stable product, much closer to the fresh state in flavour, texture and colour. This can be attributed to the minimal temperature rise associated with this process.

As preservation continues to be a necessity for food storage and distribution, new technologies are constantly being sought in the food industry. Ironically food irradiation was introduced immediately following the discovery of radioactivity in 1895, and has been studied more than any other food process. As mentioned above, extensive experiments have proven beyond any doubt that this method is not harmful, but on the contrary, beneficial to the consumer. Governmental interest in this process is increasingly emerging due to the wide array of benefits this technology has to offer. This interest, if not already established, should become a main concern for governments whose economies are still largely based on food and agriculture. Given the relatively low cost of building a food irradiation plant, compared with the cost of the already existing food technologies in Jordan, the government should seriously consider adopting this state-of-the-art inexpensive yet invaluable technology.

How can the Jordanians keep quiet or not 'sympathise' with the Palestinians when they read and hear and watch the television about Israel's treatment of their brothers the Palestinians and it is natural that this treatment breeds hostility towards Israel.

Let us, however, in this connection consider whether Israel, after the conclusion of the Oslo and Cairo agreements and of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, has changed its conduct towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories. In effect the events which occurred after the conclusion of those agreements do not inspire confidence in the intentions of Israel or in keeping up the momentum of the peace process.

U.N. poverty summit sets ambitious goals

By Evelyn Leopold
Reuter

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations World Social Summit, planned for Copenhagen in March, has devised unimaginably ambitious goals — the eradication of poverty, the creation of jobs, the well-being of peoples.

The summit, scheduled from March 6 to 12, has been plagued since its inception by the magnitude of the subject matter that tends to overwhelm the participants from 185 countries.

"It's the sea of sands," said Timothy Wirth, the U.S. undersecretary of state for global affairs. "You grab hold of it and it falls between your fingers."

Nevertheless, the response is overwhelming. More than 90 heads of state or government have promised to attend, among them Russian President Boris Yeltsin, French President Francois Mitterrand and South African President Nelson Mandela.

And more than 2,000 non-governmental groups have been accredited for participation in the conference, which is costing the United Nations close to \$3 million and Denmark \$30 million for the more than 15,000 visitors.

The summit is the brainchild of Chile's U.N. Ambassador, Juan Somavia, who calls it a "battle for the soul of the United Nations."

At the minimum, he believes the conference will galvanise governments and the private sector to focus on intractable social and economic issues that are devastating parts of the Third

World, Eastern Europe and some urban areas in the West.

Secretary General Boutros Ghali, annoyed by media concentration on U.N. peacekeeping, is determined to put social problems and development in the forefront of the 50th anniversary events at the United Nations this year.

He has made development his top priority saying it is the most sensible remedy for the world's growing political disorder and social disintegration.

The statistics are gruesome, according to U.N. literature: Over a billion people live in poverty, without jobs or basic necessities. About 700 million people are underemployed, working long hours in jobs that don't cover basic needs. Among the world's poorest, 70 per cent are women.

Many of the issues have been addressed in greater detail in U.N. conferences on children, population, the environment, human rights and debt. But the overlap with the social summit is a deliberate attempt to integrate the various programmes for poverty eradication.

Among the proposals is one from U.N. agencies dealing with development, children and population which wants nations to approve a so-called "20-20 solution."

This obligates rich nations to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for foreign aid and make sure 20 per cent of that goes for defined programmes — such as basic health and education, particularly for girls and women.

It is hard to forget

By Pascal B. Karim

NEWS REPORTS recently quoted Israel Deputy Defence Minister Mordechai Gur as saying that "the Jordanian people would like to see the concrete results of the peace and (Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin took decisions in this direction. It is, unfortunately, undeniable that there is hostility towards Israel among the Jordanian people."

Mr. Gur's assessment of this hostility is quite correct but as a military man who participated in many military operations against the Palestinians and the Arabs, he should be quite aware of the reasons for this hostility. He is no doubt aware of the brutal treatment of the Palestinians by Israel in the occupied territories. Does he not realise that Jordanians and Palestinians are like brothers. They have the same language, culture and religion and they constitute almost the same families by intermarriage. They have lived together in amity for decades on the same territory from 1948 to 1967 and previously for hundreds of years before their territory was divided into two: one Palestinian and the other East Jordan by the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 and subsequently by the mandatory powers, Britain and France, after World War I.

How can the Jordanians keep quiet or not 'sympathise' with the Palestinians when they read and hear and watch the television about Israel's treatment of their brothers the Palestinians and it is natural that this treatment breeds hostility towards Israel.

Let us, however, in this connection consider whether Israel, after the conclusion of the Oslo and Cairo agreements and of the Jordan-Israel peace treaty, has changed its conduct towards the Palestinians in the occupied territories. In effect the events which occurred after the conclusion of those agreements do not inspire confidence in the intentions of Israel or in keeping up the momentum of the peace process.

Israel directly or indirectly, through its undercover agents, or by its fanatic Jewish settlers, is still killing Palestinians, burning their trees and crops, destroying villages and detaining thousands of Palesti-

nians without trial. How can the Jordanians and the Palestinians forget the present and past excruciating treatment at the hands of Israel.

Have the Jews forgotten their torture by the Nazis. They have built a huge monument in Jerusalem to commemorate their holocaust and, as I understand, the Jews are building another one in New York so as not to forget or forgive.

After the liberation of their territory, Palestinians also deserve to erect a monument to commemorate their expulsion from their homeland, their killing in Palestine and outside it since the Deir Yassin massacre on April 9, 1948 and thereafter.

With reference to Deir Yassin massacre, once a debate took place about it between the Israeli ambassador to Canada and the famous British historian Arnold Toynbe in the 1940s. The historian Toynbe compared the slaughter, in cold blood, of the unarmed, undefended and peaceful civilians of Deir Yassin to the killing of the Jews in Germany during the World War II. The Israeli ambassador was surprised and even angered at this comparison as he claimed that there was a huge difference between the two massacres. But Mr. Toynbe retorted, indeed there was a difference in quantity but not in quality.

After all those painful events (to use a mild word) which left deep wounds in the hearts and bodies of the Palestinians, it is not surprising for Mr. Gur to recognise the undeniable hostility to Israel among the Jordanian people. Just as the Jews did not forget or forgive the Nazis for their massacre, neither the Palestinians nor the Jordanians would be able to forget or forgive what the Palestinians have suffered at the hands of Israel for decades.

And now what does Israel want from the Palestinians? In effect Israel wants the following: It wants peace but it wishes to retain the Jewish settlements and to expand them; it wants peace and security but at the expense of Arab territory; it wants peace but it insists on retaining Jerusalem for itself as the eternal capital of Israel in defiance of Arabs and Muslims.

Pella

By Rami G. Khouri
Special to the Jordan Times

MOST ANTIQUITIES enthusiasts in Jordan have probably been to the important ancient city of Pella. In the northern Jordan Valley, and some may have even wandered beyond the Pella city site to explore the adjacent Wadi Himmeh water source or the hilltop Hellenistic fortress or Jabal Sartaba.

Pam Watson, however, had a slightly different notion about how to view the region immediately around Pella. By following her instincts, she and a team of archaeologist-surveyors have uncovered significant new information about the Pella region. In the process, they may have lent important new credence to archaeological surveying research methods that are becoming increasingly vital in view of the urgent need to save ancient sites from destruction in the face of brisk urbanisation and development in the country.

Dr. Watson, the assistant director of the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History, worked for many years as a member of the Australian team that excavated Pella in the late 1970s and 1980s, revealing a large urban centre that has been almost uninterrupted inhabited during the past eight thousand years — or ever since the birth of year-round settled villages in the Neolithic Period.

She always wondered, though, about ancient human use of the abundant natural resources in the surrounding areas. Those

Israeli legisla

(Continued from page 1)

Underlining that Jordan's foreign debts represented 150 per cent of its gross domestic product was impeding the Kingdom's ability to shoulder its "functional role," the Crown Prince also noted that the "need for a cooperative strategy among Jordan's main creditors to provide debt reduction and enhanced grants."

"Decisive and timely action by the world community is strongly recommended by the World Bank," said the Crown Prince.

The Crown Prince expressed hope that the visit of the members of Knesset to Jordan would help them "to an understanding not only of the constitutional and procedural workings of the Jordanian parliamentary system, but also of the political, social and economic factors which determine the ways in which the system works."

"This exchange of information, and the beginning of an increasing contact between the two parliamentary institutions which are the

Jordan
Tel: 66

Unemployment could destabilise Arab Gulf states — economist

KUWAIT (R) — Unemployment will cause unrest in Arab Gulf states if millions of new jobs are not created in the next 15 years and reliance on foreign workers is not reduced, a Kuwaiti economist said in remarks published Sunday.

Dependence on expatriate manpower, a shortage of local skills and reluctance to do menial work will make it very difficult to create sufficient jobs, economist Jasssem Al Saadoun said in a speech quoted by the English-language Arab Times.

Mr. Saadoun made his comments in a recent speech to a conference in Dubai on economic development in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait, the newspaper said.

On current trends, the

GCC's population would rise to 39.4 million by 2010 from 25 million at the end of 1995. Those under 19, on the verge of joining the job markets, would rise to 21 million from 13.2 million, he said.

"This would mean an increase of eight million people in the labour market," he said.

"Planners and decision makers must then attempt to create enough jobs for the newcomers or face the alternative — severe unemployment with possibilities of social and political extremism. All available signs point to the latter happening," he cautioned.

Expatriate manpower formed 90 per cent of the workforce in the United Arab Emirates, 83 per cent in Qatar, 82 per cent in Kuwait, 69 per cent in Saudi Arabia and 60 per cent in Bahrain, Mr. Saadoun said, adding

Oman was believed to have similar figures.

He said GCC states should impose restrictions on immigration since the severe imbalance between expatriate and national workforce posed a very serious threat to national security.

"In times of prosperity there is enough for all. But in times of economic difficulty, divisions surface because available resources may not be sufficient," he said.

"If this phenomenon is not handled properly without seeking the assistance of security agencies, the possibility of violent clashes could become inevitable," he added.

The GCC states have for years guaranteed full employment for their nationals by using large oil revenues to create government jobs for them. They employ foreigners to do menial or spe-

cialised work nationals are unwilling or unqualified to do.

Mr. Saadoun, an adviser to Kuwait's opposition-dominated parliament, said in most GCC states unemployment had started appearing among university graduates because they were poorly educated, had unwanted skills or made excessive wage demands.

"People think that because of the large number of expatriates it will not be difficult to replace them with national manpower. The reality is otherwise," he pointed out.

"Most expatriates are working in unskilled and lowly paid jobs that are unattractive to nationals. Other expatriates are doing highly skilled jobs that nationals are not qualified to do, thus making replacement very difficult," he said.

Clinton claims credit for 6m new jobs

WASHINGTON (R) — Although the U.S. unemployment rate is up slightly, President Bill Clinton chose to accentuate the positive in his Saturday radio address, claiming credit for nearly six million jobs created in his two years in office.

Mr. Clinton also promoted anew his proposal for a 90-cent increase in the \$4.25-per-hour minimum wage spread over two years and pointed out that members of Congress make more in one month than people making the minimum wage earn all year, which is about \$9,000.

"Nobody can live on \$4.25 an hour, and yet 2.5 million Americans are working for just that amount, and many of them have children to feed," he said.

Mr. Clinton and his advisers feel the president has not been given the traditional credit due the chief executive for an improving economy, which has been the best news going for a troubled administration.

"Since I took office two years ago, nearly six million new jobs have come into our economy (and) the unemployment rate has dropped more than 20 per cent," he said.

Adding to the good news, he said, is the fact that 1994 "was the best year for economic growth in 10 years in the United States, and the combined rates of unemployment and inflation are the lowest they've been in 25 years."

Mr. Clinton did not mention the government statistic released Friday that said the U.S. unemployment rate jumped to 5.7 per cent in January, up from 5.4 per cent in December, and the number of new jobs created fell to its lowest in a year.

White House economic advisers have given a cautious interpretation of the latest jobs report. Laura Tyson, chair of the president's Council of Economic Advisers, said Friday it "might suggest some moderation in the growth of employ-

ment" but that "it's very hard to ascertain a trend from one month."

Analysts interpreted the news as a signal that the economy, which grew at a rapid 4.5 per cent clip in the final quarter of 1994, may be losing steam after the Federal Reserve raised interest rates seven times in the past year.

Mr. Clinton said he was proud of his economic record but that he was aware that "far too many Americans" have not benefited from the recovery and that his "middle class bill of rights" would provide education tax breaks to help people get ahead.

Another way to help would be an increase in the minimum wage employers are required to pay their workers, Mr. Clinton's proposal, un-

veiled Friday, would raise it 45 cents a year for two years, topping out at \$5.15 an hour.

Republicans in control of Congress promised to look at the plan but generally were sceptical, saying an increase would force employers to cut their workforces. They had joined with Democrats in 1989 to approve an identical 90-cent, two-year rise in the minimum wage.

Mr. Clinton said he believes an increase is related to the overall goal of both Republicans and Democrats this year of reforming the U.S. welfare system because it would reward people for their labour.

"If we're really serious about welfare reform, increasing the minimum wage will plainly help," he said.

PLO will ask for free trade agreement with U.S.

CAIRO (AFP) — The PLO will ask for direct trade links with the United States during talks in Egypt this week aimed at boosting the economies of the Middle East, senior Palestinian official Nabil Shaath said Sunday.

"The meeting will discuss the possibility of reaching a free-trade agreement with the United States and developing trade among Israel, the PLO, Jordan and Egypt," Mr. Shaath told AFP.

"Until now we must go through Israel to export to the United States and we want to lift barriers blocking our trade with Egypt, Jordan and the United States," said the self-rule authority's minister of international cooperation.

Exports like farm products, textiles, flowers and

olive oil are negotiated by Israeli firms, while imports to the self-rule Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho are still subject to Israeli taxes.

Unprecedented economic talks began Tuesday in the Red Sea resort of Tabá between the United States and Egypt, which will be joined Wednesday by Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown, who stopped Sunday in Cairo on his way to Tel Aviv before returning to Egypt for the talks, said the meeting was an important new step toward peace, according to Egypt's Middle East News Agency.

Mr. Shaath said "we want to take part in the plan for regional economic coopera-

tion and encourage joint investments in the autonomous areas, because we can no longer count on international aid."

"We want to ensure our economic development through investments," he said.

According to Israeli statistics, the Palestinians exported \$270 million worth of products from the Gaza Strip and West Bank last year, including \$180 million worth to Israel.

They imported \$1.1 billion worth of products, including \$1 billion from Israel.

Under economic accords signed in Paris in 1994, Israel must hand over to the Palestinian Authority the right to tax imports entering the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

But this system has yet to

take effect in the absence of Palestinian ports.

According to PLO official Majdi Al Khalidi, the talks in Tabá will discuss laying economic foundations like roads, electric and gas networks, and Palestinian-Israeli industrial zones.

Funding for the projects has yet to be decided but is expected to be covered by bilateral or multilateral loans, according to Mr. Khalidi, who serves in the self-rule authority's "ministry" of planning.

Self-rule has been put in jeopardy by poverty and Islamic militant violence.

Mr. Khalidi said the meeting would also approve the creation of regional trade regulations, investment laws and training programme as a first step in cooperation.

"We still need a proper customs area for trade with Egypt and Jordan," Mr. Khalidi said.

He had no figures for the export of Palestinian goods since the start of autonomy, but said the Israeli income from the export of West Bank and Gaza products in 1993 was \$350 million.

A lack of clear investment laws has so far kept businessmen away from the Palestinian autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho.

International experts have stressed the importance of the Palestinian private sector as international assistance, set at \$2.4 billion over five years, would eventually run out.

Donors met recently in Gaza to improve the flow of funds, hampered in 1994 by

a lack of local Palestinian institutions and of coordination among the donor countries, the World Bank and the United Nations.

Out of some \$800 million pledged, only \$228 million came through and were mostly spent on the Palestinian self-rule authority's recurrent expenses such as salaries.

Samir Abdallah, head of the project department of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR), said some \$600 million have been pledged for 1995.

The money will mostly be funnelled toward education, health and rehabilitation of the badly damaged infrastructure, he said.

PECDAR channels the Palestinian authority's international funds.

Balladur aims for deficit cuts without tax hikes

PARIS (R) — Prime Minister Edouard Balladur, favourite to win the French presidency, has set a target of cutting the budget deficit without tax hikes and portrayed himself as the candidate of peaceful reform.

In his first televised interview since declaring his candidacy last month, Mr. Balladur hit out at rivals prescribing radical economic and social change, saying: "The French people do not want to be experimented on like Guinea pigs."

Credited by opinion polls with a big lead over all other candidates in the April-May election, Mr. Balladur said the French wanted to turn the page after economic crises and 14 years under Socialist President Francois Mitterrand.

"Growth has returned... it will allow us to make more

changes and reforms without imposing more suffering on the French people who have already suffered so much," he said, pushing a message of optimism and unity.

Mr. Balladur, 65 and often criticised as uninspiring and aloof, said he did not aim to raise taxes as president but that reducing France's budget and welfare deficits would take priority over tax cuts.

Outlining his tax plans, Mr. Balladur said: "Given the current state of the nation's and the welfare system's accounts, a massive cut is not possible without new taxes on the other side."

"Since I do not want to create new taxes, I think on the contrary we must wait for the recovery to create jobs... We will only be able to seriously consider cutting when we have lowered the deficit," he pointed out.

G-7 unanimously endorse Mexico rescue

TORONTO (R) — The world's seven leading industrial powers put aside differences and unanimously gave their blessing Saturday to a U.S.-led \$50 billion rescue package for Mexico.

After two days of talks, finance ministers and central bankers from the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy and Canada expressed "total satisfaction" with efforts to aid Mexico.

"The support is unequivocal for the American package," said Canadian Finance Minister Paul Martin, who chaired the meeting of the so-called Group of Seven (G-7) nations at a Toronto hotel.

Leading up to the two-day meeting, the United States and its European allies were at odds over the handling of a \$50 billion bailout U.S. President Bill Clinton had cobbled together at the last minute for

Mexico.

As part of the deal, Mr. Clinton said that the U.S. allies would contribute to a \$10 billion loan package for Mexico through the Switzerland-based Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) would make its biggest-ever loan of \$17.8 billion to Mexico.

In a rare show of diplomatic pique, half a dozen European countries, including Germany and Britain, abstained when the board of the IMF voted on the Mexico rescue Wednesday, saying the U.S. had not properly consulted them.

The G-7 tried Saturday to brush aside the rift, with Mr. Martin emphasising that support for the U.S.-led effort had been unanimous.

The exclusive club of the

world's richest countries also said they were optimistic about the state of the global economy.

Economic growth has been robust, inflation is moderate, job creation is improving and unemployment rates are falling in most countries, Mr. Martin said.

"The challenge now is to ensure that we sustain growth," Mr. Martin said, adding that there was no room for complacency on getting budget deficits down.

Japan assured its partners that its economy could continue to grow despite the damage from the Kobe earthquake in January. Japanese Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura said Japan is making its best efforts to cope with reconstruction.

The Bank of Japan's Masayoshi Matsushita, who was appointed central bank

governor in December, said he was grateful that Japan's G-7 partners expressed condolences over the Kobe earthquake, which killed more than 5,000 people.

But the G-7 had harsher words for Russia, saying that they are concerned the recent rise in inflation and the war in Chechnya may throw Moscow off the course of economic reform.

"The G-7 strongly encourage the Russian government to remain on the path to a market economy, an objective that can only be furthered by a timely agreement with the IMF on a standby (loan) agreement for Russia," Mr. Martin said.

The IMF, the world's monetary watchdog, negotiates loans to help economic reforms in developing countries, often with tough conditions attached.

Israeli cabinet cancels capital gains tax

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel's cabinet voted Sunday to cancel an unpopular capital gains tax, in a move aimed at bolstering the sagging stock market and restoring confidence in the economy.

The tax on stock market profits, which was to go into effect Jan. 1 but had not been implemented, was cancelled by a vote of 13-2, said government secretary Shmuel Hollander.

Politically, the flip-flops have eroded Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's credibility at a crucial juncture in the peace process with the Arabs and at a time of declining popularity over continuing terrorism.

The tax was widely blamed for worsening a collapse of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange, which lost about 40 per cent of its value in the past year. Since reports last week that the tax would be

cancelled, the market rose 12 per cent.

On Sunday, however, the Mishkanim index fell 3.6 per cent, closing at 166.83.

Former finance minister Yitzhak Mordechai said the market's instability proved it was fundamentally unhealthy. "It wasn't the tax that brought down the stock market, and its cancellation will not revive it," Mr. Mordechai told army radio.

Hanna Pridan, an analyst for Bank Leumi, attributed the sluggish market to the past year's nearly 15 per cent inflation rate, which, given the stability of the Israeli shekel against the dollar, has cut into exporters' profits.

Mr. Rabin agreed to the stock tax six months ago, arguing it would help fight inflation. Later, he backed away from that argument and implied he was misled by economists.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY FEBRUARY 6, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your greatest benefits can come now by being altruistic and lend a helping hand to allies and good friends so you can have the benefit of their friendship.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) The measure of your success in the New Year is measured by the intelligence with which you handle others and everyone you meet in the outside world.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Today is the start of a new cycle which is about to begin for you and now is the time to make the most of any enterprise that you are currently working on.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) Excellent hunches will be yours on this day and it would be wise to write them down for use in the future. Follow your intuition.

LEO (July 22 to August 21) If you want to gain greater success today, it is a good time to get together with associates and come to a far better understanding.

VIRGO (August 22 to September 22) Express the Virgo motto "I serve," whenever possible now since you can gain much in the future by being kind, altruistic and caring to those around you.

LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) You have been much tested in the past as to patience and goodness, but now things begin to happen for you. Do not hesitate to accept invitations and to prepare for a successful and happy future.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Many situations will require intelligent thought and handling so that you may achieve the harmony you desire. Make it a point today to invite interesting parties to interesting events.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) You have a seeking and inquiring mind and if you make the effort to contact highly philosophical individuals you will gain new wisdom and many new constructive ideas for the future.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 20) A day to think out how to better your position in life, make home conditions more harmonious, and expand in every direction possible.

AQUARIUS (January 21 to February 19) By being very dynamic and happy today you will please others so much that you increase your circle of friends appreciably among the worthwhile. This leads to the success you deserve.

PISCES (February 20 to March 20) Make this a day for meditation and the absorption of finer philosophical ideas that will place you more in the tune with what is right and proper.

Birthstone of February: Amethyst — Onyx

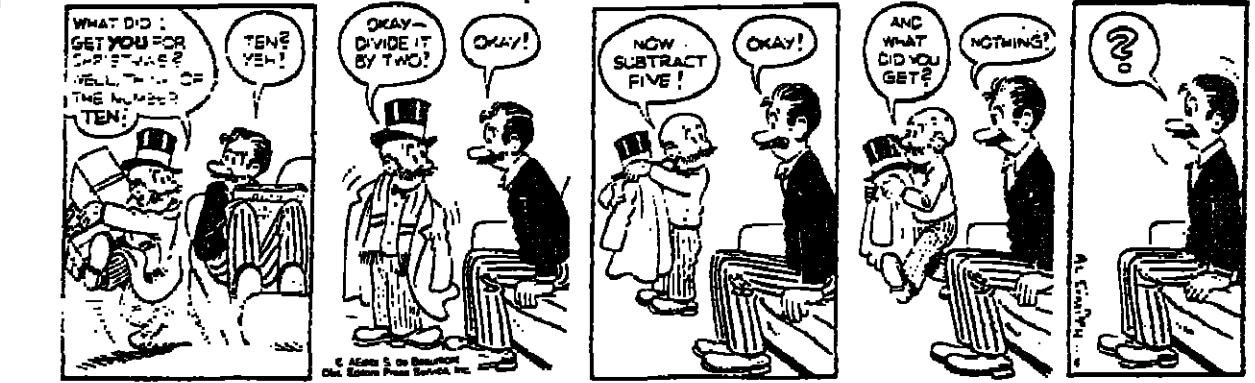
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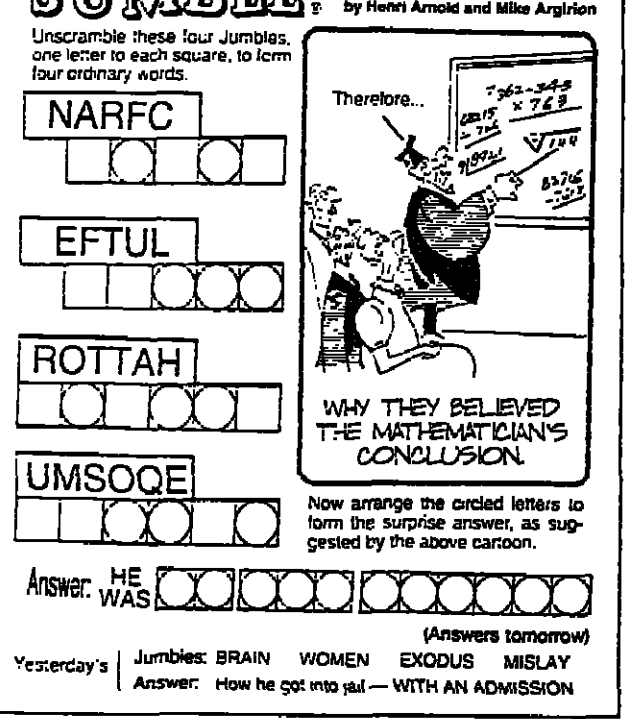
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



THE Daily Crossword

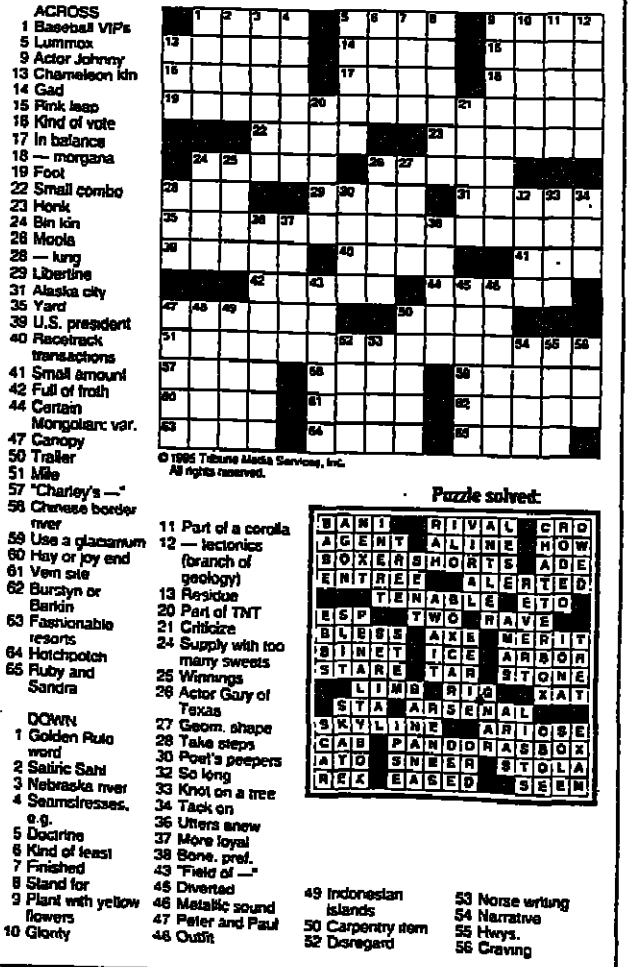


Figure Skating Bonaly takes fifth gold

DORTMUND (AP) — Saving the best for last, Surya Bonaly made it five-for-five.

Bonaly, 21, produced a smooth and exciting performance to gain her fifth consecutive European women's figure skating title.

After falls and mistakes by several of the top skaters, including by two Russian contenders and the German hope, it was Bonaly who brought the crowd alive.

Her fifth straight title puts her within one of the all-time European best shared by Katarina Witt and Sonja Henie.

Bonaly won her first title in 1991 and felt she has gotten better each year.

"I've always learned a lot and tried to improve and develop as a personality," Bonaly said.

Bonaly had been trailing entering the final free programme, worth two-thirds of the final score. And she had been perhaps vulnerable to a challenge from Russian Olga Markova, the leader after the short programme.

But Bonaly was on top of things, starting with a difficult and rare triple lutz-triple toe loop combination that she attempted for the first time in competition.

Skating to lively gypsy music, she added five more triple jumps that earned her marks in the 5.7 to 5.9 range on a scale of up to 6.0.

She had four 5.9 for presentation.

"I have been working a lot on that because the judges always have considered it a fault of mine," said Bonaly,

noted for being more of a jumper than an artist on ice.

Now Bonaly turns her attention to the world championships in March in Birmingham, England, last year she was favoured but came in second.

"I just want to go out there and skate my best," Bonaly said. "And not think of last year."

Markova had to settle for the silver medal after scaling down a couple of jumps from triples to doubles, while Elena Liashenko of Ukraine placed third, although she was merely fifth in the free skating.

"I am not satisfied with my performance," said Markova. "I desperately wanted to win here. That's perhaps why I was so nervous." But the crowd loved the 21-year-old woman in red, skating gracefully to music from the musical "Miss Saigon," and gave her long applause.

On her home ice, Tanja Szewczenko spoiled her medal hopes — and the chanting crowd's high expectations — with two falls and a couple of slips.

Irina Slutskaya of Russia nearly got a medal with the third best free skating of the afternoon, also producing seven triple jumps.

Marina Kielmann of Germany took sixth, "jumping from 13th."

The championships ended with Russian collecting five medals.

Susanna Rahkamo and Petri Kokko gained Finland's first gold medal by capturing the ice dance event Friday.

Surya Bonaly: Saving the best for last (AFP photo)



European Figure Skating Championships at the Westfalenhalle:

Men
Gold-Ilya Kulik, Russia.
Silver-Alexei Urmanov, Russia.
Bronze-Vyacheslav Zagorodniuk, Ukraine.

Women
Gold-Surya Bonaly, France.
Silver-Olga Markova, Russia.
Bronze-Elena Liashenko, Ukraine.

Pairs
Gold-Mandy Woetzel and Ingo Steuer, Germany
Silver-Radka Kovarikova and Rene Novotny, Czech Republic
Bronze-Yevgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov, Russia.

Ice Dance
Gold-Susanna Rahkamo and Petri Kokko, Finland.
Silver-Sophie Moniotte and Pascal Lavanchy, France
Bronze-Angelika Krylova and Oleg Ovsianikov, Russia.

Japan's Date wins Toray title

TOKYO (AP) — Kimiko Date, playing better and better as the tournament progressed, defeated a sloppy-serving American Lindsay Davenport on Sunday to become the first Japanese to win the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament.

The fifth-seeded Date won 6-1, 6-2 in 52 minutes as Davenport served nine double faults.

Date raised her racket in the air to acknowledge the cheers of the more than 7,400 spectators.

"I reached my peak on the final day," she said, alluding to her long, close matches in the first and second rounds. "I wasn't able to get my concentration and rhythm at the beginning but I regained them as the tournament proceeded."

Date, 24 years old and ranked No. 10 in the world, broke in the second game of the first set at love, jumped to a 3-0 lead and went on to take the first set on the artificial court at Tokyo Metropolitan Gym.

Davenport broke in the fourth game of the second set at love for a 2-2 tie, but Date rallied to win the next four games. Davenport hit a forehand long on match point.

"I didn't play well today. My serve really let me down," said the 18-year-old American, ranked No. 6.

Date earned \$148,500 and increased her career earnings to \$1,092,094, the first Japanese tennis player to surpass the \$1 million barrier. Date is also the first Japanese to win this tournament, first held in 1984.

Davenport took home \$66,500.

Provis wins Amway Classic

In Auckland, New Zealand, Australian wild card Nicole Bradtke rallied to defeat defending champion Ginger Helgeson Nielsen in three sets Sunday in the final of the \$107,500 Amway Classic women's tennis tournament.

Bradtke, 25, defeated the second-seeded American 3-6, 6-2, 6-1 in just under two hours to win her first title for two years.

The former French Open semifinalist used her accurate groundstrokes to keep Helgeson Nielsen on the run in many of her rallies.

The quality of her returns added to the pressure on her opponent, who failed to hold serve in the final two sets.

Bradtke, formerly Nicole Provis, trailed by a set and a service break before before fighting back impressively.

"It's never over before the last point is won and I just tried to maintain that attitude," said Bradtke.

Bradtke, once ranked 24th in the world, earned \$17,000 for the third major title of her career.

Cole strike turns up heat on Rovers

LONDON (AFP) — Andy Cole's first goal for Manchester United put the champions within two points of Premiership leaders Blackburn on Saturday, as manager Alex Ferguson received a double boost in his bid for a third successive title.

After months of speculation about this imminent departure to Everton — intensified by the arrival of Cole last month — Welsh star Mark Hughes confirmed his immediate future at Old Trafford by signing a new two-year deal before the match.

Six million pound striker Cole gave Ferguson a further lift as United secured all three points with a 1-0 victory over Aston Villa.

The victory turned up the heat on Kenny Dalglish's men, who face a difficult trip to Tottenham on Sunday.

Cole, whose left eye was badly swollen after an early clash with Bryan Small, broke his 11-match scoring drought with a typically sharp

close-range finish.

Cole said he was delighted that United had agreed a new two-year deal with Hughes, who will partner him when he completes his recovery from a knee injury.

"I came to United to play with the best players in the country," said Cole. "We're without Eric Cantona for the rest of the season, but I'm looking forward to playing with Mark. He's a great player and I admire him and the way he plays."

Ferguson was disappointed by his side's overall performance but was happy that his British-record signing got on the scoresheet.

victory at Loftus Road with all the goals coming in the first 18 minutes.

Les Ferdinand, again the subject of transfer speculation this week, netted twice within eight minutes after being set up on each occasion, by his teenage striking partner Kevin Gallen.

Simon Barker completed the scoring against Kevin Keegan's side, who were short of eight players through "flu", injury and suspension.

Two of the league's most promising strikers were on the mark at the City Ground, where Liverpool's Robbie Fowler ended his six-game goal drought by cancelling

BRITISH SOCCER

Cole pounced for his 16th goal of the season after 18 minutes when Ryan Giggs' corner was nodded down by Gary Pallister to end the three-game winning run of Brian Little's improving side.

Giggs later went off following a clash with John Fashanu who was carried off on a stretcher.

Meanwhile, Cole's former teammate suffered a thrashing at the hands of QPR, who stormed to a 3-0

out Stan Collymore's opener for Nottingham Forest.

Red cards were in evidence at Hillsborough, where Sheffield Wednesday advantage of Arsenal being reduced to nine men with a 3-1 win.

Tony Adams, on his first league start for two months, was given his marching orders for lashing out at Mark Bright while new signing John Hartson was sent off for a challenge on Romanian Dan Petrescu.

Ferrari likely to dominate Daytona's 24-hour race

DAYTONA BEACH, Florida (AP) — At a track best known for the exploits of American-made stock cars, Ferrari has had its moments of glory.

The last of those moments in the Daytona International Speedway spotlight came in 1972 when Mario Andretti and Jacky Ickx drove a Ferrari 312P sports car to victory in a six-hour race — the only time since 1996 that the event has been shorter than 24 hours.

That was the fourth overall victory for the Italian cars. But Ferrari, which has not run here in the top division of the Rolex 24-hour race, the season-opener for the International Motor Sports Association and its ex-cousin Supreme Series, since that 1972 victory, is likely to dominate this version of America's most famous important endurance race.

Last year, IMSA dropped its former showcase, the GT prototype division, in favour of the world sports cars, which were intended to promote competition and lower costs.

The Ferraris were not yet ready for competition and a slim and untied field of WSCS failed to make much of an impact in the 24-hour race, succumbing to a variety of mechanical problems as a Nissan 300ZX GT-S-class entry became the first production-based car to win the race since 1983.

Since then, Ferrari has come aboard the series with a bang, dominating the WSC division.

Now, in their first 24-hour outing, four of the Ferrari 333SP world sports car entries will be at the front of what is expected to wind up a field of about 60 cars.

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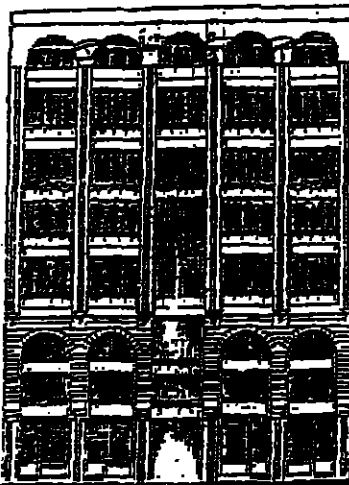
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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Bruguera, Ivanisevic in Dubai Open

DUBAI (R) — Six of the world's top 20 players will be playing in the Dubai Open which starts on Monday with the top matches scheduled for evening because of the holy month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast during the day. Heading the field in the 1 million ATP-sanctioned tournament will be French Open champion Sergi Bruguera and Wimbledon finalist Goran Ivanisevic. Ivanisevic, seeded two, is paying his first visit to the Gulf Arab Emirate. Top seed Bruguera, who lost in last year's finals, will be making another attempt to capture the top prize of \$142,000. Last year's winner Magnus Gustafsson of Sweden is unable to defend his title because of an injury.

Brazilian player dies during match

BRUSSELS (AP) — A 23-year-old Brazilian soccer player died Saturday evening after suffering a heart attack during the Belgian second division match. Calisto Augusto of Boom FC collapsed 10 minutes into the second half of his team's match against Geel. He was pronounced dead shortly after arrival at Geel hospital. The Belgian news agency Bega reported. The referee halted the game, which Boom FC was leading 3-0.

Work begins to modify Imola track

IMOLA (R) — Work to modify the Imola Formula One race track, where Brazilian Ayrton Senna crashed to his death last year, began on Saturday after the Italian government approved a \$6 million rebuilding plan. Federico Bendinelli, of the Sagis Company which runs the circuit, said the San Marino Grand Prix would go ahead as scheduled on April 30 after the environment ministry gave the plan the green light on Friday to modify the Tamborello, Villeneuve and Lower Variante Curves as they reconstruct some 50 per cent of the track to bring it into line with new safety standards.

Spartak Moscow wins Commonwealth Cup

MOSCOW (AP) — Dmitry Alenichev and Mukhsin Mukhamadiev scored three minutes apart early in the second half Saturday, sparking Spartak Moscow to a 5-1 victory over Dynamo Tbilisi and its third straight five-a-side Commonwealth Cup. With Spartak leading 1-0 on Nikolai's Pisarev's 13th-minute goal, Alenichev scored in 58th and Mukhamadiev in the 61st to hike the lead to 3-0. The \$100,000 Commonwealth Cup was organized after the Soviet Union collapsed. All former Soviet republics took part.

Volker beats own backstroke record

PARIS (R) — Germany's Sandra Volker improved her own European short-course record for the women's 50 metres backstroke in the Parisian stage of the Swimming World Cup on Saturday. Volker, bronze medalist in the 100 metres backstroke at the European Championships in 1993, clocked 27.77 seconds, 0.09 seconds faster than her previous best, set in Hong Kong earlier this year. The record provided the only excitement of an otherwise lack-lustre meeting.

Haitian president causes stir at match

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — President Jean-Bertrand Aristide turned a tennis club into an armed camp Saturday when he showed up to watch Haiti's Davis Cup doubles match against Canada. A half dozen military vehicles filled with U.S. soldiers in full battle gear rolled into the parking lot of Bailevue Club, where the three-day contest is under way. "This is our job, to make sure he gets here and gets back," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ed Davis. "We're trying to stay in the background." Aristide, dressed in a white sports shirt and grey slacks, greeted players of both teams. "To those who win, good luck," he said. "To those who lose, good luck as well."

Nantes humbled by semi-pros

PARIS (AFP) — Nantes, France's unbeaten league leaders, were sensationally dumped out of the French Cup by the semi-professional team of St. Leu on Saturday night. St. Leu, a third division club based in a forest suburb northeast of Paris, held their mighty opponents to a 1-1 home draw after extra time — and then won the penalty shoot-out 4-2. For Nantes, unbeaten in their 24 league matches this season and 10 points clear at the top of the first divisions, it was their second cup disaster in less than two weeks. They previously went down 1-0 at home to Bastia in the League Cup.

Deportivo frustrated by 10-man Bilbao

LA CORUNA, Spain (R) — Deportivo Coruna were held to a frustrating 0-0 home draw Saturday by a stubborn Athletic Bilbao who played half the match with 10 men. Juan Goicoechea was sent off for the visitors two minutes before halftime for a second bookable offence and although the Galicians pushed forward to drives late in the game, the well-disciplined Bilbao defence held firm. Deportivo's best chance came four minutes from time. Javier Manjarin swung in a corner and Donato Da Silva's precise header was brilliantly tipped over the bar by goalkeeper Juan Valencia. Despite dropping a point, Deportivo remain second in the table, a point behind Real Madrid who play Sevilla on Sunday.

Former relay gold medalist Brown dies

CONEYHURST, England (AP) — Godfrey Brown, who anchored Britain's gold medal winning 1,600 metre relay team at the 1936 Olympics, died Saturday after a short illness, he was 79. Brown also won a silver medal in the 400 in the 1936 Games at Berlin's Olympic stadium, and two years later won the European title over the same distance. On the same day Brown won Olympic gold, his elder sister, Audrey, won a bronze medal for Britain in the women's 400 meter relay. Brown, a widower from Coneyhurst, is survived by one son and three daughters.

Spinal surgery for Sharpe

GREEN BAY (AFP) — Green Bay Packers wide receiver Sterling Sharpe is expected to spend the weekend in hospital after surgery to repair two vertebrae in his neck, the National Football League team said. Team doctor Patrick McKenzie said the operation went as planned, and Sharpe was resting comfortably. Sharpe, the Packers' career receptions leader with 595 catches, was injured in a game against Atlanta on December 18. He reigned in his necks the following week. He suffered tingling and weakness in Sharpe's arms and legs and forced him to miss Green Bay's two play-off games.

TODAY	Cinema Tel.: 634144	Cinema Tel.: 699238	Cinema Tel.: 677420	Tel.: 618274 - 618275	Tel.: 675571	Nabil & Hisham's Tel.: 625155
	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre.	AHLAN THEATRE
	Armand Assante & Sherilyn Fenn in FATAL INSTINCT Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Bruce Willis...in DIE HARD II Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:30, 10:30 The movie: THE LION KING will be shown on Fridays and Thursdays at 11:00 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.	CONCORD "1" Sylvester Stallone - Sharon Stone in The Specialist Shows: 12:30, 2:30, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Tom Hanks ... in Sleepless in Seattle Shows: 2:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	SUM'A in the satirical play HI CITIZEN Composed and directed by Mohammad Al Shawaqfeh Daily from 8:30 p.m. Children's Play The Ninja Turtles Show Directed by Akram Abul Ragheb Daily at 10:30 p.m.	Presents Abu Awwad in the social comedy Punctured Bag The theatre is closed on Mondays Tickets are available all day	Presents: The political satire: AL SALAM YA SALAM at 8:30 p.m. For reservation, please call 625155 The theatre is closed on Saturdays & Sundays

Cavaliers win; Dee Brown ties Bird's record

CLEVELAND (AP) — John Williams scored 19 points and Bobby Phillips made a short bank shot to stop a Cleveland dry spell in the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers held off the Indiana Pacers 82-73 Saturday night.

The Cavaliers ended a four-game losing streak, their worst of the season, and Indiana's three-game winning streak.

It was the 10th time Cleveland has held an opponent under 80 points this year; the Cavs have won all 10. Indiana's 73 points were a season low for the Pacers.

Phillips scored 17, Danny Ferry had 12 and Tyrone Hill collected 14 rebounds for the Cavs. Reggie Miller scored 19 and Derrick McKey 12 for the Pacers.

Celtics 92, Nets 78: In East Rutherford, N.J. Dee Brown tied Larry Bird's team record with seven 3-pointers and scored a season-high 31 points to lead the Boston Celtics to a victory over the injury-riddled New Jersey Nets.

The Celtics hit 11 3-pointers and got 17 points from Dominique Wilkins in winning for just the second time in nine games.

Brown, taken out of Boston's starting lineup two games ago, hit eight of his first nine shots and finished 10-for-18 from the field.

Chris Morris had 20 points for the Nets, who played without Derrick Coleman and Kenny Anderson, both out with injuries.

Pistons 84, Hawks 78: In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Grant Hill scored 22 points and Terry Mills added 18 points and 17 rebounds, leading the Detroit Pistons over the Atlanta Hawks.

Joe Dumars contributed 17 points on a night the Pistons retired the No. 40 jersey of his former teammate, Bill Laimbeer.

Atlanta was led by Mookie Blaylock's 16 points. Grant Long had 15. Ken Norman had 14 off the bench for the Hawks.

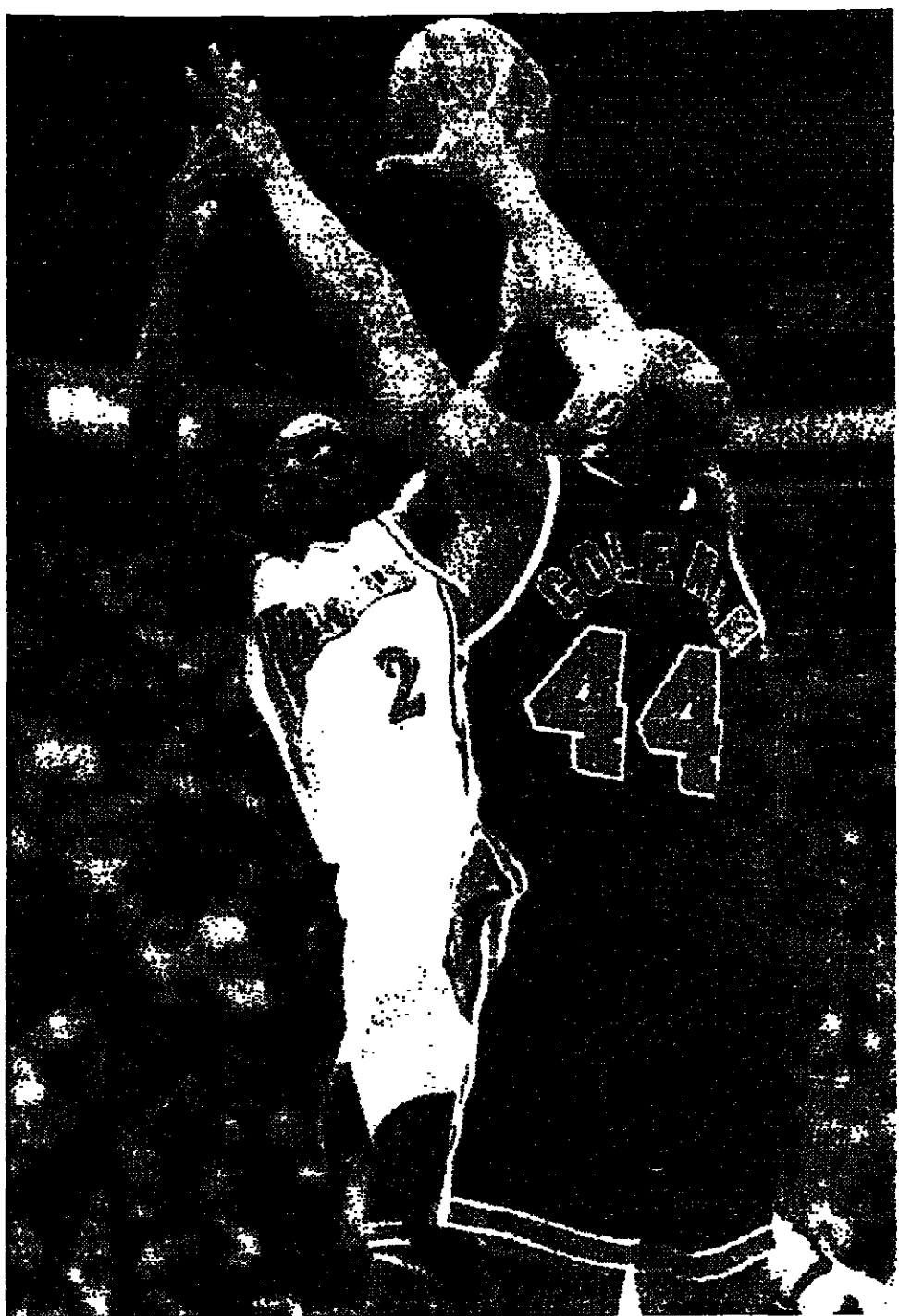
Detroit made just 25 of 73 field goal attempts, including 3-for-19 shooting in the fourth quarter, but outscored the Hawks 26-11 at the free throw line.

Mavericks 119, Jazz 98: In Dallas, Jim Jackson and Jamal Mashburn went on a third quarter tear and the Dallas Mavericks snapped a 17-game losing streak to Utah.

Dallas hadn't defeated the Jazz since Nov. 23, 1991. Utah lost its second straight on the road after a 15-game winning streak and played the second half without coach Jerry Sloan, who was ejected.

Jackson had 30 points and Mashburn added 25 for the Mavericks while Jason Kidd had 16 points and nine assists. George McCloud came off the bench to score 22 points.

Popeye Jones and Lorenzo Williams had 15 rebounds apiece for Dallas, which had lost nine of its previous 10. Karl Malone scored 22 points and had 10 rebounds



Stacey Augmon of the Atlanta Hawks tries to shoot over Derrick Coleman of the New Jersey Nets (AP photo)

and John Stockton had 20 to lead the Jazz. Jeff Hornacek had 13 points.

San Antonio 97, Sacramento 96: In San Antonio, David Robinson scored 34 points and tied the game in the final minute as the San Antonio Spurs defeated the Sacramento Kings.

With the victory, San Antonio improved its winning streak to seven games.

The Spurs grabbed a 94-93 lead on a basket by Robinson with two minutes remaining, but Mitch Richmond made a 3-pointer — his first point of the fourth quarter — to give the Kings a 96-94 edge.

Robinson followed with a dramatic dunk with 49.2 seconds remaining to tie it. Dennis Rodman, who had 22 rebounds for the Spurs, then hit one of two free throws with 35.4 seconds left to give the Spurs the win.

Alaa Abdelnaby led the Kings with 24 points, and Richmond added 19.

76ers 102, Bucks 96: In Milwaukee, Dana Barros scored 31 points, including 12 in the final period as the Philadelphia 76ers held off a

furios fourth-quarter charge to beat the Milwaukee Bucks.

Barros hit a breakaway basket, a momentum-killing 3-pointer and seven of eight free throws in the fourth quarter after the 76ers had blown most of their 22-point lead.

Reserve Jon Barry's 13 fourth-quarter points helped pull the Bucks, who had beaten Philadelphia three times this season, within four points on two occasions after trailing 81-63 at the end of three periods.

Clarence Weatherspoon added 20 points and 10 rebounds for Philadelphia.

Vin Baker, who had 16 points and 18 rebounds for Milwaukee, and Glenn Robinson scored 22.

Lakers 121, Clippers 118: In Los Angeles, Eddie Jones scored 30 points and Anthony Peeler added a season-high 27 as the Los Angeles Lakers defeated the Clippers 121-118.

Nick Van Exel added 20 points for the Lakers.

Malik Sealy led the Clippers with a career-high 34 points. Loy Vaught had 28 points and 10 rebounds and Tony Massenburg had 20.

The Lakers played without starters Cedric Ceballos and Elden Campbell, and lost starting center Vlade Divac in the second half.

Divac bruised his right thigh at the end of the first quarter. He returned in the second quarter to play nearly 17 minutes.

RESULTS

Cleveland	82	Indiana	73
Detroit	84	Atlanta	78
Boston	92	New Jersey	78
Dallas	119	Utah	98
Philadelphia	102	Milwaukee	96
San Antonio	97	Sacramento	96
LA Lakers	121	LA Clippers	118

Davis Cup

Germany, Russia advance

LONDON (AP) — Germany and Russia secured places in the second round of the 1995 Davis Cup Saturday, while defending champion Sweden avoided elimination by winning its doubles match against Denmark.

Sweden, after losing both singles matches on Friday, rallied behind Jan Apell and Jonas Bjorkman, who lost the first set before posting a 6-7 (6-8), 6-3, 6-4, 6-2 victory over Kenneth Carlsen and Morten Christensen.

Denmark, without a player ranked in the top 200, can still pull off the upset if either Carlsen beats two-time Wimbledon champion Stefan Edberg or Frederik Fetterlein plays Bjorkman in Sunday's reverse singles on the indoor carpet at Copenhagen.

The last defending champion nation to lose in the first round was the United States, eliminated by Australia after winning the title in 1992.

Russia, last year's runner-up, raced to an insurmountable 3-0 lead over Belgium at Antwerp, with Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Andrey Olhovskiy beating Libor Pimek and Filip Dewulf 2-6, 7-5, 7-5, 6-3.

At Karlsruhe, Germany, Boris Becker and Michael Stich put aside their personal rivalry to give Germany a 3-0 lead over Croatia.

The two German stars, who have openly feuded off the court, proved too strong for Goran Ivanisevic and Sasa Hirszon in a 6-4, 7-6 (7-3), 7-5 victory.

Croatia, making its World Group debut, had pinned its hopes of an upset against Germany on Ivanisevic, the left-hander whose powerful serve has carried him to the world No. 5 ranking.

But the Germans pounced on Ivanisevic's cannonball serve at key moments, breaking him at 5-4 to claim the first set.

Becker and Stich teamed up to win a gold medal in doubles at the 1992 Olympics, but Becker's appearance in Friday's singles was the first time he has played Davis Cup since Germany's 1992 win against Belgium. His reluctance to play has been the source of the latest feud with Stich.

There's a lot of competition between the two of us — no question," said Stich, who had threatened to quit Davis Cup play if Becker tried to join the team after skipping the early rounds. "But we're just a good doubles team."

Elsewhere, play finally got underway in Durban, South Africa, where Friday's singles had to be postponed because a rain leak made a specially-prepared court unplayable.

On Saturday, it was crushing humidity and a stomach virus that took their toll on Australia as the teams split the opening singles.

Wayne Ferreira, the world No. 11 singles player and anchor of the South African team, beat doubles ace Mark Woodforde in straight, hard-fought sets, 7-6 (8-6), 7-5 and 6-3.

Woodforde, half of the formidable "woodies" pair with Todd Woodbridge, was rushed into the match when Richard Fromberg fell ill with a stomach virus.



Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman

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In the other match, Patrick Rafter, Australia's top singles player, wilted in the humidity of the Indian Ocean city but still saw off Marcos Ondruska, 6-3, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 in 2 hours, 49 minutes.

But the exhausted Rafter had to be treated for dehydration afterward and it was unclear what kind of shape he would be in for a reverse singles match against Ferreira.

The doubles will be followed by the reverse singles. Elsewhere in the World Group, Italy took a 2-1 lead over the Czech Republic, as did Austria over Spain, the Netherlands over Switzerland and the United States over France.

On clay at Geneva, Jacco Eltingh and Paul Haarhuis, the top doubles pair in the world, defeated Switzerland's

Jakob Hlasek and Lorenzo Mantu 6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

The Swiss pair had never played together before, even in practice. Mantu, making his Davis Cup debut and ranked No. 458 in the world, stepped in for Swiss No. 1 Marc Rosset, who broke his right foot in his match Friday and will be sidelined for up to three months.

On hard court at Vienna, Thomas Muster and Alex Antonitsch beat Spanish duo Sergi Bruguera and Emilio Sanchez 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3. Bruguera, ranked No. 4 in the world, proved a weak partner for Sanchez, an experienced doubles player who has won many doubles titles with currently injured partner Sergio Casal.

"Today we had two singles players and two doubles players on court," said Muster, also a singles specialist. "Alex played better than Sanchez, and I played better than Bruguera. So we won."

On clay at Naples, Italians Stefano Pescosolido and Cristian Brandi defeated Cyril Suk and Martin Damm 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (7-3), 7-6 (7-2).

On the indoor carpet at St. Petersburg, Florida, Richey Reneberg and Jared Palmer rejoined a week after their Australian Open title victory for a 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 win in doubles over Guy Forget and Olivier Delaite.

The victory puts France on the defensive with Guy Forget scheduled to play his third match in as many days Sunday to open the reverse singles against Todd Martin. Jim Courier, who trounced Forget in straight sets Friday, will face Pioline in Sunday's other singles match.

Hull has first NHL hat-trick of season

ST. LOUIS (R) — Brett Hull recorded his first hat-trick of the season and Denis Chassé added two goals and an assist to lead the St. Louis Blues to their third straight win, a 7-4 victory over the Dallas Stars Saturday.

The hat-trick was the 22nd of Hull's career.

Kevin Hatcher had a goal and an assist for the Stars.

In Boston, Jozef Stumpel's goal with 8:24 left in the game lifted the Boston Bruins to a 5-4 victory today

in a see-saw game at Boston Garden.

Stumpel's goal, his first of the season, finished a three-on-one attack on Hartford goalie Sean Burke.

Boston's offense bombarded Burke with 53 shots, including 22 in the final period.

In Montreal, Mike Keane scored two goals and set up another and Patrick Roy made 32 saves to lead the Montreal Canadiens to a 4-2 victory over the New York

Islanders.

In Washington, Calle Johansson's power-play goal with 6:29 remaining gave the Washington Capitals a 3-2 victory over Florida Panthers.

In Philadelphia, Brent Fedyk, Garry Galley and Eric Lindros scored second period goals as the Philadelphia Flyers ended a three-game winless streak with a 4-2 win over the Buffalo Sabres.

Galley and Fedyk both scored on the power play in the second period before Lindros extended the Flyers lead to 4-1 with only a second left in the period.

In Winnipeg, Todd Elik's second goal of the game with 6:35 left in the third period lifted the San Jose Sharks into a 3-3 tie with the Winnipeg Jets.

The Sharks extended their unbeaten streak to six games but had their five-game winning streak halted.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH
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KEEP SHOVELLING

Both vulnerable, East deals.
NORTH
♠ Q 9 2
♥ 10 8 7
♦ 3
♣ Q 9 8 5 4

WEST
♠ 10 5 3
♥ K 6 5 4
♦ 9 8 2
♣ J 7 2

EAST
♠ J 9 3
♥ K Q 10 6 4
♦ A K 10 8
♣ A E J 8 7 6

SOUTH
♠ A Q 2
♥ A 7 5
♦ A 7 5
♣ 6 3

The bidding:
East South West North
1♣ 2♦ Pass 2♠
Pass 2♠ Pass 3♠
Pass 4♠ Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠.
There's nothing we detect more than someone giving us a hand with "2" in place of a spot card. Had

been the case here, no one could have unseated the best line.

Even at this vulnerability, we think South is too strong for a one-spade overcall. The right way to

handle the hand is to double first, then show your suit. When North scraped up a raise, South went on to game.

West led a low diamond covered by the jack and queen and ducked in the closed hand. The diamond continuation was taken by the ace and a diamond was ruffed on the table. Despite our normal railing against simply taking a finesse, the winning line now is to take not one, but two finesses!

The ten of hearts was led from dummy and, had East ducked, declarer would have run it in the hope something good might happen. However, East covered with the jack and declarer's queen lost to the king. West shifted to a club to East's king and a trump was returned. Declarer won in hand, entered dummy with queen of trumps and led the eight of hearts for a finesse against the nine. If East covered, declarer would win with the ace and the seven would be high. If East ducked, so would declarer and the eight would win. South's thoughtful play resulted in the loss of only one trick in each side suit.



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Sameh Madani
Managing Director

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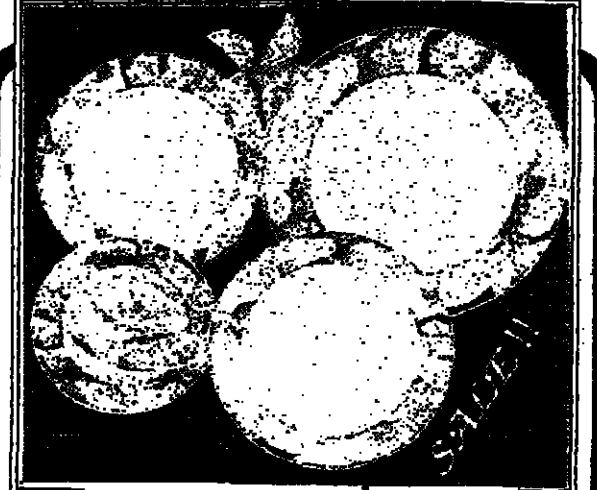
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NEWS IN BRIEF

Turkey offers to sell water to Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Turkey has proposed to sell Israel 60 million cubic metres of drinking water a year to solve shortages, officials said Sunday. However, Water Commissioner Gideon Tzur said the price of \$1.2 a cubic metre, including sea transport, was three times what Israel wanted to pay. The amount proposed would cover 10 per cent of national domestic consumption in Israel today. Mr. Tzur was to visit Turkey later this month to try to negotiate a deal.

Israel introduces new 10 shekel coin

TEL AVIV (AP) — The Bank of Israel announced Sunday that a new 10-shekel coin would go into circulation this week. The step came after annual inflation surged to 14.5 per cent last year, nearly twice the government's target for 1994. Shmuel Bilitsky, head of the bank's currency department, said the 10 shekel (\$3.3) coin will replace bills that cost the same to print but have a shorter life span. One side of the coin shows a date tree with the inscription "Liberation of Zion," the other is engraved with the word "Israel" in Hebrew, Arabic and English and shows a cluster of dates. Bank of Israel said that the 10-shekel coin was the first to be made of two different coloured metals.

Two Israelis die in old minefield

TEL AVIV (AP) — Two Israelis died this weekend when they strayed into an old minefield near the Red Sea resort of Eilat, police said Sunday. The two Eilat residents drove a jeep into a fenced-off area near kibbutz Eilat and triggered an old mine, Israeli radios and police added. Warning signs were prominently placed outside the area and it was not clear why the two men entered the minefield, police added.

Mauritanian opposition leader freed

NOUAKCHOTT (R) — Mauritania's main opposition leader, arrested last month on charges of fomenting bread riots, returned to his home in the capital on Sunday after being freed from detention in the interior of the country. Ahmad Ould Daddah, leader of the main opposition Union of Democratic Forces, told Reuters he had been held in Tichit, 700 kilometres from the capital. Mr. Ould Daddah, half-brother of the former French colony's first president, Moktar Ould Daddah, was the last of eight opposition activists detained after the riots to return home. Hamdi Ould Mounkass, head of the Union for the Progress of Democracy, returned home on Friday and six other opposition militants from the two groups have been freed, party and family sources said.

Detainees still have sex with their wives

CAIRO (AFP) — Dozens of Islamic militants jailed in Egypt have had regular sex with their wives during prison visits and fathered children, ignoring an official ban, the Egyptian weekly Rose Al Youssef reported Sunday. During the weekly visits by relatives "the man sleeps with his wife while his cellmates hide them with blankets," the magazine said. Under Egyptian law male or female prisoners are forbidden to have sex with their partners. Prison department chief Nabil Seyam denied that such activities were allowed after his appointment last summer. But Rose Al Youssef said one militant, Assem Abdul Maged, sentenced to hard labour for life for involvement in the assassination of former President Anwar Sadat in October 1981, was a bachelor when he entered prison but a few years later got married in jail and became a father.

Iraqi team leaves Egypt without deal

CAIRO (AFP) — The first Iraqi delegation to visit Egypt since the 1991 Gulf war left here without food and medicine contracts but secured promises of future economic cooperation, an Arab diplomat said Sunday. The diplomat said the trade delegation left Saturday after a week-long visit which went unreported in Egypt. Baghdad broke ties with Egypt which took part in the U.S.-led offensive to drive Iraq from Kuwait in January-February 1991. The Egyptian-Iraqi talks produced "a joint understanding calling for stronger bilateral economic cooperation in future, especially after the lifting of the embargo" imposed after the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, he said. "No agreement however was concluded on supplying Egyptian food and medicine to Baghdad," the diplomat added.

Sudan denies bombing Ugandan border areas

KHARTOUM (R) — Sudan on Sunday denied charges by neighbouring Uganda that it bombed Ugandan territory as part of a campaign to crush rebels from southern Sudan who have taken refuge there. State-owned Radio Omdurman said Omar Yousef Barido, the first under-secretary of foreign affairs, summoned Uganda's charge d'affaires and told him the Sudanese army had clear instructions not to bomb inside Uganda. Mr. Barido said the bombing charges were part of a media campaign against Sudan. Uganda last week officially complained to Sudan over the alleged bombings. Sudan's ambassador to the Ugandan capital Kampala, Einayet Mohammad, said Thursday he could not rule out the possibility that the Sudanese air force had bombed border areas and might do so again in its war against the rebels.

Iran has 500,000 drug addicts

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has 500,000 drug addicts among its population of around 60 million, Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati said Sunday. Mr. Besharati told the daily Kayhan that there had been a sharp drop in the number of addicts since the 1979 Islamic revolution which toppled the Shah. There were "two million addicts in Iran in the year before the revolution, although the population was only 37 million at the time," he said. Iran is a major transit route for drugs, mainly opium, from Afghanistan and Pakistan destined for Europe and North America. Some of the drugs are synthesised into heroin and morphine before they are exported. The authorities here, however, have waged a merciless war against drug trafficking in the past five years, sealing off borders and handing down stiff punishments to smugglers.

Egyptian mufti bans poor from smoking

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's mufti, the country's highest Sunni Muslim authority, has declared it "unlawful" for poor people to smoke if they cannot afford to feed their families, newspapers reported Sunday. "I do not want to impose a total ban on tobacco use, but it is unlawful if the smoker is poor and cannot manage to feed his family," said Sheikh Mohammad Sayed Tantawi, quoted by Al Akhbar daily. "Smoking is not desirable from the religious viewpoint, but it is tolerated if the smoker is well-off, or if he cannot concentrate on his work without tobacco. However, it would be better if you gave up cigarettes," the mufti told Egyptians. A packet of Egyptian-made cigarettes costs 1.5 Egyptian pounds (\$0.45), while imported foreign cigarettes cost four pounds (\$1.2) a packet.

Saudi prince gives \$7 million to charity

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabian businessman Prince Al Waleed Bin Talal Ben Abdul Aziz, who owns nearly 25 per cent of Euro Disney SCA, gave away 29 million riyals (\$7.7 million) to 185 charities, his bank said on Sunday. A detailed list by United Saudi Commercial Bank (USCB) sent to Reuters said the prince's Ramadan donations this year were nine million riyals (\$2.4 million) more than the previous year.

Brown begins Mideast mission

CAIRO (Agencies) — U.S. Commerce Secretary Ronald H. Brown opened a Middle East tour on Sunday, pledging to encourage economic development in the region to further prospects for peace.

Mr. Brown also said, after talks with President Hosni Mubarak, that his visit to Cairo was intended to express American appreciation for the Egyptian leader's role in the Mideast peace process. "We will be doing everything we can to focus on regional economic development, how it can have a positive impact on the lives of the people in the entire region," Mr. Brown said in outlining the purpose of his trip.

Mr. Brown will make stops in Jordan, Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar before leaving for Washington on Friday.

On Wednesday, he will join in a meeting of trade officials from the Palestinian territories, Israel, Jordan and Egypt in the Egyptian resort of Taba, near the Israeli border.

Asked if he would address Arab fears that the U.S.-backed peace process would wind up with Israel dominating the region's economy, Mr. Brown said he would try to allay "the fears of all of the parties" taking part in peace negotiations.

Mr. Brown's original schedule did not include a stop in Cairo, and he said the visit was added to deliver a letter from President Bill Clinton congratulating Mr. Mubarak on the success of last week's summit of Israeli and Arab leaders.

"We wanted to express the appreciation of the United States for the leadership role that President Mubarak has taken in creating a sense of momentum in the peace process," he said.

He said the letter from Mr. Clinton congratulated the Egyptian president for last Thursday's meeting. Mr. Brown referred to "the extraordinary leadership and courage" that Mr. Mubarak showed in the peace process.

Last week's summit meeting in Cairo was the first time that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin met together with the Arab leaders who reached peace accords with Israel — Mr. Mubarak, King Hussein and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

Syria criticises summit

Syria said Sunday only Israel gained from the summit.

"The Cairo meeting gave nothing to the Arabs and Israel obtained what it wanted without yielding anything," said the official daily Al Thawra.

The government newspaper Tishreen said Israel was "the sole beneficiary" from the meeting and "nothing positive came out of it concerning Jewish colonisation, the closure (of the Palestinian territories), Jerusalem or nuclear weapons."

"Israel's position has not changed. On the contrary, Israel has become more arrogant since the meeting and stepped up settlement expansion on the West Bank."

Tishreen said Mr. Rabin's call for the Palestinian self-rule authority to wipe out "terrorists" meant "in his language, the Palestinian uprising and Palestinian patriotic forces fighting to end the occupation and colonisation."

The mouthpiece of Syria's ruling party, Al Baath, said Israel had scored a point at the Cairo summit, which was "an attempt to suggest that a new axis has been born."

Syrian-Israeli peace talks are stalled over the scope and timetable of a planned Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

The official daily Syria Times also attacked Mr. Arafat who it said pledged to help stop anti-Israeli resistance while Mr. Rabin did not budge from his "tough policies."

"Rabin made no concessions to Arab demands for a complete halt to Jewish settlement activities in occupied territories, neither did he make a clear commitment to speed up delayed Palestinian elections and the freeing of Palestinian detainees," the English-language paper said.



IRAQI MESSAGE: His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday received at the Royal Court Iraqi Minister of Higher Education Hammam Abdul Khaleq (above), who conveyed to the King a message from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. The meeting was attended by Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qassem (Petra photo).

Artillery, bombs strengthen Russian grip south of Grozny

STARY ATAGI, Russia (Agencies) — Russian forces moved to strengthen their control of the area south of Grozny on Sunday, bombing and shelling roads leading to the Chechen capital.

The Russian fire-power made it hazardous for Chechen fighters or civilians to approach a Russian armoured force sitting astride a strategic crossroads.

The intersection controls one of the last two roads from southern Chechnya, still controlled by the separatist rebels, into Grozny.

The road, leading past the town of Stary Atagi, was punctuated by columns of smoke as artillery boomed out a steady rhythm. Russian snipers were also taking shots at traffic down the road.

The other southern access road to Grozny was bombed by a Russian aircraft on Sunday near where Chechen rebels had assembled on Saturday in defence against any Russian assault.

However, Chechen guerrillas said nobody was hurt in Sunday's attack.

The roads south of Grozny were heavily trafficked by refugees moving out of villages

in the way of the southward Russian move following the capture of the crossroads last Friday.

About a third of Grozny remains in Chechen independence fighters' hands, but the area has been destroyed by Russian bombardments and is almost deserted.

Russian snipers were also firing Sunday at an intersection of a road leading to where a Russian Sukhoi-27 jet was shot down by the Chechen rebels on Saturday.

The aircraft lay scattered across a 100-metre radius of snow-covered field about 16 kilometres southeast of Grozny.

Delembay Timiyev, one of the band of rebels in the area which claimed to have shot down the aircraft, quoted the pilot's last words as "I have a house and a son."

The soldiers said they shot down the plane with a heavy anti-aircraft gun that shoots rapid rounds of explosive bullets.

"The pilot ejected, but his parachute didn't open. He was still alive when he hit the ground, his legs were smashed and he was missing

his arms," Timiyev, 27, said. Moscow has confirmed losing the Sukhoi-27.

Meanwhile, Chechen fighters said they were planning a night attack on the crossroad captured by the Russians on Friday.

They said they were waiting for weapons supplies, including a battery of Grad multiple rockets.

A Russian government statement said the Chechens were still putting up "fierce resistance" in parts of Grozny to give the forces of rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev time to set up defence lines elsewhere in the ruined city.

It also said Russian forces killed 350 Chechen fighters and captured 10 armoured vehicles on Saturday. Similar claims have proved exaggerated in the past.

The Russian forces made loudspeaker announcements calling on Chechen fighters in the southwest of the city to lay down their arms, saying the army would otherwise not be responsible for the consequences.

But the rebels vowed to fight on despite being hugely outgunned and outnumbered.

'Arafat complains that foes have more arms'

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chief Yasser Arafat complained during the Cairo summit that militants have more guns than his Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a senior Israeli official said Sunday.

"They have more weapons than I do," Mr. Arafat reportedly told Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on Thursday evening.

"If Hamas is stronger than you and has more weapons perhaps you are not our partner," Mr. Rabin retorted, according to the official.

The tense exchange came amid Mr. Rabin's demands that the self-rule regime crack down on hardliners spearheading an armed struggle against Israeli occupation.

Mr. Arafat reportedly accused Israelis of "selling weapons to Hamas" and offered to give addresses.

Mr. Rabin took up the offer, the official said, but Mr. Arafat failed to deliver.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein then intervened speaking to Mr. Arafat in Arabic, which Mr. Rabin interpreted as a bid to change the tone.

The Israeli premier nonetheless went on to charge Mr. Arafat with failing to take real measures against the militants.

The official said Mr. Rabin compared the 200 suspects Israel arrested after the Jan. 22 suicide bombing which killed 21 with seven Islamic Jihad members arrested by Palestinian police.

"We have arrested others in the past, but they were acquitted," Mr. Arafat replied.

Mr. Rabin added accusations that some had been acquitted on other offences after intimidating a judge.

According to the official, Mr. Mubarak also pointed out to Mr. Arafat that Egypt had jailed people trying to smuggle explosives to Gaza for 25 years.

Kuwait curbs rights of stateless, women — U.S.

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait improved prison conditions and expanded the franchise in 1994 but still curbed the rights of stateless people and women including foreign maids, a U.S. State Department report issued by the embassy on Sunday said.

The trial of 11 Iraqis and three Kuwaitis on charges of trying to assassinate former U.S. President George Bush did not meet international standards, the annual human rights survey added.

"The government made some progress on human rights, and it has emerged from the troubled human rights environment of the post-liberation period," the report said. But it added:

"The government continues to abridge or restrict a number of significant rights. Limitations on the freedoms of assembly and association and women's rights remain in place."

"The government continued its policy of preventing the return of stateless, Iraqi and Palestinian people who have strong family ties to Kuwait," it said, referring to groups that fled or were expelled after the 1991 Gulf war.

Kuwait has come under fire at times on human rights issues since the Gulf war, in particular for alleged extrajudicial killings after Iraq's 1990-91 occupation.

A 1991 State Department report alleged that after liberation in February 1991, Kuwaitis committed more than 300 killings as they pursued foreigners suspected of collaborating.

The 1994 report said the government had not published the results of its investigations into the deaths and has given no indication as yet that it intended to take further action.

Kuwait says any killings that took place happened in regrettable but understandable conditions of post-war chaos. Officials say incidents subsided after Kuwaiti leaders returned from exile and reasserted control in May 1991.

The report said the trial of Iraqis and Kuwaitis on charges of trying to kill Mr. Bush on a visit to Kuwait in 1993 "did not meet internationally accepted standards regarding an independent

judiciary and the evidence required for proving abuse."

It gave no details. Previous State Department reports have said defence lawyers alleged that defendants were coerced to confess. Kuwaiti authorities deny this.

A state security court in June 1994 sentenced five Iraqis and one Kuwaiti to death, acquitted one Kuwaiti and sentenced five Iraqis and two Kuwaitis to prison terms for offences ranging from possession of explosives to illegal entry.

The death sentences are subject to automatic appeal.

The survey said the government had improved conditions in overcrowded prisons and detention centres, extended the all-male franchise to the sons of naturalised citizens and invited the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to Kuwait for consultations on labour issues.

Parliament's human rights committee continued to probe human rights abuses and had urged improvements in prison conditions.

There were no reports of political or extrajudicial killings or disappearances and

citizens were free to criticise the government at public meetings and in the media.

There were credible reports that security officials blindfolded, slapped and hit some detainees although reports of such incidents continued to decline, it said.

Kuwait strongly denies abuse of foreigners or detainees. It says its human rights record is far superior to those of most of its neighbours, especially Iraq, which Kuwait says holds 600 Kuwaitis detained during the occupation, a charge Iraq denies.

The report said the plight of 117,000 Arabs of undetermined nationality with long residency in Kuwait "remains a significant human rights abuse."

Women suffered legal and social discrimination and some Asian maids were abused by employers.

Kuwait denies widespread abuse of Asian maids.

So-called stateless Arabs say they have no official papers stating nationality, a handicap in a country where citizenship confers welfare benefits, and do not have the right to work.

Dr. Rizk, a spokesman for more than 250 doctors who organised a sit-in at the union's downtown headquarters to protest at the arrests, denied his colleagues had violated the law.

He confirmed they were members of the Brotherhood, but said they were pursuing their goals with democratic means.

Dr. Rizk ridiculed the charges against the Brotherhood members, saying some were accused of possessing books written by Brotherhood figures, available in bookshops.

President Hosni Mubarak's government is clamping down on militant groups who

want to overthrow the government and establish a strict Islamic state.

Al Gamma Al Islamiyah (Islamic Group) has led the campaign since 1992, and more than 650 people have been killed in violence since.

The Muslim Brotherhood was established in 1928 by a school teacher named Hassan Al Banna. President Gamal Abdul Nasser imprisoned hundreds of Brotherhood members in 1954 after a dispute, and sentenced several of their leaders to death.

Mr. Mubarak tolerated the group's activities and its control of several professional unions but it was never allowed an independent political party, denying the members a legal status.

After the escalation of political violence, the government accused the Brotherhood of sympathising with militants.

Media performance under review

AMMAN (Petra) — Information Minister Khalid Al Karaki said Sunday the government was committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of the official media performance. Commenting on a remark by a member of the Lower House of Parliament Ahmad Al Kofahi, the minister said: "We have actually stopped many programmes and commercial advertisements failing to conform with the Jordanian state media, its values and mores which both the Constitution and National Charter have enhanced." The minister said his ministry was reviewing all programmes and administrative regulations.

Ghosheh meets W. Bank team

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Palestinian Affairs Department at the Foreign Ministry Assem Ghosheh on Sunday received a delegation representing chambers of commerce in Ramallah, Bethlehem and Jericho, headed by Assem Hassomeh. Mr. Ghosheh reviewed with the delegation issues pertaining to facilitating the travel and movement of Palestinian citizens to Jordan and enhancing bilateral relations. Mr. Ghosheh said Jordan was ready to provide every possible support for the Palestinians in the occupied territories and promised to follow up on some issues of concern to them, including passports and certification of papers.

Blast kills 2 in S. Lebanon

MARIYOUN (AP) — A bomb explosion Sunday killed a 10-year-old boy and his teenage sister and wounded five others in an Israeli-occupied border enclave in South Lebanon, security sources said. The bomb exploded at 12:30 p.m. (1030 GMT) outside a mosque on the main street of Houla, a village about three kilometres from the Israeli border. The boy, Wadhi Abboud, and 6-year-old sister Rose Abboud, were killed, said the sources.

Algerian party leader beheaded

ALGIERS (AFP) — A leader of Algeria's National Liberation Front (FLN), Ahmad Kasbi, has been beheaded, security services said Sunday. Kasbi, a member of the central committee of the FLN — formerly Algeria's sole political party — was abducted Tuesday. Only his head was recovered Thursday in a railway station at Khemis-Miliana west of Algiers, the evening daily Horizons quoted security services as saying.

Iraq reports rickets, stunted growth

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq on Sunday said cases of rickets and stunted growth had appeared among children because of severe milk shortages due to United Nations sanctions, the official news agency INA reported. "The economic blockade imposed on Iraq has caused a severe milk shortage which threatens the lives of children," a trade ministry spokesman told the agency. He said Iraq imported \$300 million worth of milk annually for children before sanctions were imposed in 1990, and that the country now lacked 40 per cent of its needs. "The proportion of underweight newborn babies is high compared to before the blockade," he added.

Iran rejects U.S. charges

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran has angrily rejected U.S. accusations of human rights violations, accusing Washington of pursuing "illegitimate" political aims. Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi hit back saying the United States "violates the rights of other nations and pursues inhumane anti-Islamic policies in various ways."

"The issue of human rights is a ploy used by Washington to carry forward its illegitimate aims," he told the official Islamic republic news agency IRNA. In its annual report on Wednesday, the U.S. State Department accused the Iranian government of being a "major abuser" of human rights. "Systematic abuses include arbitrary arrests and detentions, widespread use of torture, lack of fair trials, summary executions and repressions of freedom of speech, press and association," the report said.